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ABSTRACT

A follow-up study was conducted at Sierra College (California) to determine why students who dropped out of all of their classes during fall 1984 left the college. The dropout population included 1,549 students, of whom only 374 (27%) returned to college in spring 1985. A survey instrument was sent to all withdrawing students, requesting information on personal characteristics; educational, social, cultural, and personal goals; educational background; academic major; college choice; grade point average; course load; employment; academic, financial, and other reasons for withdrawing from college; awareness and use of college services; educational attitudes; and perceptions of Sierra College. Study findings, based on 400 usable responses and comparisons with findings from a 1981 retention study, included the following: (1) profile characteristics were the same for 1981 and 1984, with the "typical" dropout likley to be a Caucasian or Hispanic, middle-aged, married, female, taking one class for three or fewer units for avocational or recreational purposes, with no intention of transferring; (2) first-time students withdrew at a lesser rate in 1984 than in 1981; (3) 39.9% of the 1984 group withdrew in the first two and one-half weeks of the semester; (4) over half declared general studies as their major; (5) 46% of the 1984 group had attended college before; (6) 50% of the 1984 group knew of college services but did not use them; and (7) personal reasons were most frequently cited for leaving college, followed by academic and financial reasons. The survey instrument is appended. (LAL)

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# SIERRA JOINT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

FOLLOW-UP STUDY
OF THE FALL 1984
SIERRA COLLEGE DROPOUTS

Dr. Gerald C. Angove
President and
District Superintendent

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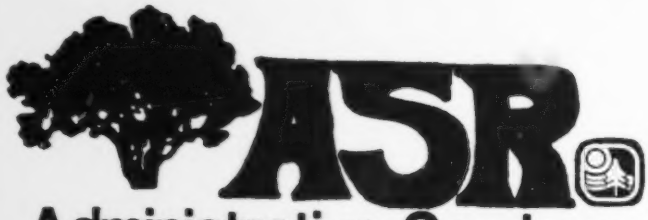


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SIERRA JOINT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

# FOLLOW-UP STUDY
# OF THE FALL 1984
# SIERRA COLLEGE DROPOUTS

By: Donald A. Brophy, Ed.D.
Dean of Research and Planning
Sierra Community College

April 8, 1986

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# FOLLOW-UP STUDY
# OF THE FALL 1984
# SIERRA COLLEGE DROPOUTS

## I. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

Retention is a major concern of educators at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels. The highest rate of college attrition takes place during the first year, particularly in community colleges. In the Fall of 1981, the first-time day enrollees at Sierra College were analyzed to gain more information about those who stay or leave. The impact of individual and interactive effects of selected student development activities on retention were also studied.[4] It was found that counseling had a significant bearing on increased retention, increased number of courses taken, and higher grade point averages.

The 1981 study did not include continuing, returning, nor transfer students who may have dropped out. The study failed to measure subjective or value laden attitudes about education, knowledge and use of services, reasons for leaving, and other related items.

Drawing upon Festinger's[7] theory on dissonance, Pervin[14], Beal and Noel[3], Delworth and Hanson[6], and Stern[17], emphasize the importance of the interaction of the student with the college environment. It is hypothesized that the greater the degree of fit or congruence between the college and student and commitment to educational goals, the greater the involvement, sense of belonging, and retention. All theories and research findings indicate that dropping out is a complex and intricate interplay

among a multitude of variables. Therefore, studying but one variable leaves unanswered the interactive effects of other variables upon the decision to leave college. Most studies cannot account for more than 50 percent of the variance related to dropping out.

Iffert[9], and Sexton[16], found students were more inclined to drop out at the beginning or end of the term than in the middle. The final decision to withdraw is made during vacation or when college is not in session. Rouche[15] found that over 47 percent of community college students leave at the end of the first year. Most who drop out thought about it and made their decision during a vacation or semester break. Most made the decision during the summer vacation when there was no opportunity for counselors to help the students. If dropouts accurately predict prior to the beginning of courses when they will leave college, perhaps they are preprogrammed for attrition, further eroding their commitment to remain in college.

Twenty-five percent of the dropouts considered leaving before they even enrolled. Baratte[2] found that 67 percent of the persisters ranged in age from 19 to 27, with 32 percent being 28 years of age or older. Forty-seven had occupational goals as contrasted to transfer. Those who dropped out had grade point averages of 2.0 or higher (90%) and were female (56%).

In 1973, Gum[8] found that at the College of San Mateo, the major reasons for leaving college were full-time employment, personal problems, health, and finances. He also found they failed to establish an identity with the college and failed to seek assistance for the "cause" of their attrition. While the overall attrition rate in his study was 16 percent, only 3 percent were transfer oriented students.

Knoell[10] studied 34,000 students in 32 community colleges and found full-time freshmen and transfer students were significantly more persistent than part-time students, a large constituency in California Community Colleges.

To summarize, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)[5] set forth certain Community College missions which are presently being reinforced by the Commission For the Review of the Master Plan For Higher Education. They call for access for a diverse population with a complex set of goals, competencies, and commitments. Concerns for assessment, placement, counseling, retention, and accountability are emerging which makes imperative, knowledge of our students' "value added" aspects of our teaching and curriculum, and transferability. A major problem for providing answers to those concerns is our lack of information about our students, particularly those who drop out.

## Purpose of Study

It was decided to follow-up on students who completely dropped out of the Fall, 1984 semester and ascertain why they left and were there any differences in the findings based on their unit enrollments as of first census. Would these students differ from the 1981 sample? If so, how?

A major goal of the Sierra College Survey was to ascertain the types of students who drop out and reasons why 1,569 of them completely withdrew from college during the Fall of 1984. Sub goals were established which would lead to an improved survey instrument and research methodology leading to early detection programs which would target "high risk" students for special services. Such action programs would have the major goal of increasing student retention. With these goals in mind, an institutional intelligence base about those who drop out was needed and prompted the survey.

## II. DESIGN, INSTRUMENT, SUBJECTS, DATA COLLECTION, AND LIMITATIONS

The Fall, 1981 retention study became the impetus for this study. The population for the 1981 study was the first-time day student only. The 1984 follow-up study looked at all students who had enrolled in the Fall of 1984 and completely dropped out during the term. Though the populations differed, the profile of the dropouts were quite similar. It should be pointed out that "retention rate" or "dropout" in the 1981 study refers to students who may have dropped one or all of their courses. The definition for the 1984 study pertains to students who dropped all of their courses.

Of the 1,760 first-time, day students in the Fall of 1981, 649 (37%) failed to return for the Spring semester but may have completed a course(s) in the Fall of 1981. Eventually, 52% failed to return for the second year. The 1984 dropout population represented a total of 1,549 students (17% of 9,049 original enrollees) attending day and evening courses who completely withdrew from that semester and only 374 (24%) returned for the Spring semester of 1985. There were 1,175 of the original 1,549 Fall, 1984 dropouts who still had not enrolled by the end of the Fall, 1985 semester.

It must be noted that the percents for the Fall of 1981 dropouts represented in this study are in relation to the total of the original 1,760 student population of first-time day

students by classification (e.g., male) in each category (gender). The percents for the Fall, 1984 dropouts and those responding to the questionnaire are intergroup ratios or the percent of a specific classification within a category of each population or sample. Percentages yield a basis for relative intergroup comparisons which must take into account the differences represented by the derivation of the 1981 and 1984 percentages.

A recent report on enrollment trends to the Board of Governors made by Chuck McIntyre[12], Director of Analytical Studies at the Chancellor's Office, shows the largest losses of community college students in the Fall of 1984 occurred among students taking 6 to 8 units who were under 20 years of age, and black. These decreases are attributed to the new student enrollment fee, increased employment, continued decline in the number of high school graduates, and a shift to earlier academic calendars in some districts.

Based partially on information from the 1981 study, related research findings and literature, and select items from the "Former-Student Questionnaire," found in A Manual for Conducting Student Attrition Studies,[13] a preliminary survey instrument and cover letter was developed to be reviewed, modified as needed, and pilot tested to help determine who dropped out of the Fall, 1984 semester and why. Certain socioeconomic and attitudinal or value laden factors related to retention were included in

addition to the variables of age, sex, major, transfer intention, and other items found on the college application and maintained in District computer files.

It was decided to send the untested survey to the 1,569 students who had completely withdrawn from the Fall, 1984 semester, to expedite the findings. The dropout students were to respond anonymously in hopes of increasing the return rate. Four-hundred and twenty-nine (27%) were returned and 400 (26%) were evaluated. Krejcie[11], suggests that for a population of 1,500 subjects, a sample of 306 students would decrease the probability of error to the point that one could be 90 percent certain the sample represented the population.

It appears the untested protocol and anonymity were not beneficial to a more effective methodology or increased return rate. The survey items should have been tested by a pilot study for clarity and necessary modification as originally planned. Anonymity precludes a random sampling of respondents, follow-up of nonrespondents, more intensive interviews for clarification of responses, or further probing.

The identification of each student would have eliminated the need to poll eight of the 28 questions in the survey and could have facilitated reporting by accessing each student's computer record for additional data elements and information. Perhaps a split-half method could be used in the future where half of the

student records are identified and the other half remain anonymous. By comparing one against the other, a measurement of return rate could be established.

The survey was not controlled for random sampling. Therefore, the survey and action research methodology lost some of its predictive power even though the total universe of dropouts was surveyed. The study employed ex post facto, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory techniques. Self-reported data must take into account that it may be distorted by personal needs, perceptions, and forgetting. This is where anonymity has its greatest potential impact. A respondent can feel free to respond honestly without fear of identification.

The results are represented primarily by whole numbers, averages, and percentages with some means. Variations in levels of measurement, sampling considerations, and questionable value of some higher order statistics, precluded the use of analysis of variance, correlational, and factor analysis techniques at this time. It is hoped this preliminary work will lead to information and investigative clues which will lend themselves to future studies of narrower scope, using experimental research methodologies.

## III. RESULTS

The data is presented in three major configurations. The first will describe and profile: 1) the first time, day students in the Fall of 1981; 2) the total Fall 1984 enrollment as of first census; 3) the 1,569 students who completely withdrew in the Fall of 1984; and 4) the 400 dropouts who completed and returned the questionnaire. This array is developed to detect similarities and differences among the groups for generalization of findings. It must be kept in mind that the percentages for the 1981 study group are representative of the number in a particular classification (332 males) in relation to the original population for that classification (938 males). The 1984 percentages represent the individual classifications (male) in relation to that particular category's total (male and female) for that particular population or sample.

The second major configuration relies primarily on CCFS 130-131 and "Selected Statistics" formatting to present a wide range of variables comparing the total Fall 1984 enrollment of 9,049 students to the 1,569 who completely withdrew that term. This was done to determine if and how these two groups differed on the data elements represented in those reports.

The third group represents a focus on only the 400 who responded to the survey. The survey provides more specific and detailed information which may have questionable value in some

instances. While "static demographics" (sex and ethnicity) may help identify high risk or target groups, they are not factors that can be modified through action programs to improve retention rates as can be the case with knowledge of services. The true value of this more intensive investigation is found in the results of the self-reported data, including attitudes or values.

## Fall 1981 and 1984 Enrollment and Dropout Comparisons

As seen in Tables 1, 2, and Appendix B, students who returned for the Spring, 1982 semester attempted and completed more units and courses (3.74 courses for Fall enrollees, compared to 4.38 courses in the Spring). They had a higher retention rate (percent of courses completed) and grade point average (1.92 in the Fall versus 2.05 in the Spring). Incompletes and withdrawals were treated as "F's", resulting in lower GPA's. Older students were more apt to drop out with a mean age for Fall 1981 enrollees of 23.63 and a mean age for the Spring of 22.44 (Appendix A). The greatest attrition occurred in the 30 years of age and older group.

Fewer first-time day male students withdrew in the Fall of 1981 when compared to the population of 1,760 students in which there were more males (53%). This held true for the Fall of 1984 when all dropouts were analyzed. Women responded to the questionnaire more frequently than men. Seven out of ten of the

400 respondents were women where only six out of 10 of the total dropout population were women.

The 1981 day only attrition population was younger. The 1984 total enrollees (29.7 years), all of those who dropped out (31 years), and those returning the questionnaire (32.4 years) were about the same age but older than the 1981 sample.

Caucasians, Hispanics, and American Indians are more apt to withdraw while Asians, Filipinos, and Blacks have higher retention rates. The largest drop ratio of any ethnic group is held by Caucasians, when looking at whole numbers. However, when those who drop out are compared to the original number of students in a particular ethnic category, more Hispanics will withdraw in relation to their original number, followed by Caucasians.

Those in the 1981 study most likely to drop out were taking courses for personal/recreational reasons (62.5%), to upgrade job skills (51.8%), other reasons (44%), to earn a certificate (40%). Of those declaring a two-year major, 43.6 percent failed to return for the second semester. Approximately 25 percent of the four-year majors failed to return for the second semester. It can be seen that women withdrew at a greater rate than men (38.3% to 35.4%) as did Hispanics (38% of original group) and Caucasians (37.2%). The majority of those who failed to return had declared

TABLE 1

COMPARISONS OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF
THE 1984 TOTAL ENROLLMENT, THOSE WHO DROPPED OUT,
AND THOSE WHO RESPONDED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE 1981
NON RETURNEES, ON GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND AGE

| Characteristic | Total Enrollment 1984 N=9,049 | | Total Dropouts 1984 N=1,569 | | Dropout Respondents 1984 N=400 | | 1981 N=649 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | %[a] |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 3,992 | 44.2 | 649 | 41.4 | 123 | 30.8 | 332 | 35.9 |
| Female | 5,053 | 55.8 | 920 | 58.6 | 277 | 69.2 | 314 | 38.34 |
| **Ethnicity** | | | | | | | | |
| Caucasian | 8,255 | 91.2 | 1,439 | 91.7 | 371 | 92.8 | 590 | 37.2 |
| Hispanic | 359 | 4.0 | 69 | 4.4 | 18 | 4.5 | 35 | 38.0 |
| Asian | 124 | 1.4 | 14 | .9 | 3 | .8 | 3 | 12.0 |
| Black | 56 | .6 | 12 | .8 | 2 | .5 | 2 | 16.7 |
| American Indian | 154 | 1.7 | 27 | 1.7 | | | 10 | 34.5 |
| Filipino | 18 | .2 | 2 | .1 | 1 | .3 | | |
| Other | 83 | .9 | 6 | .4 | | | 8 | 72.7 |
| **Mean Age** | 29.7 | | 31.0 | | 32.4 | | 24.0 | |

[a] Percent of original 1,760 students by classification within the category (Appendix A).

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF ALL FALL, 1984
DROPOUTS (1,569), TO THE FALL, 1981,
FIRST-TIME, DAY STUDENTS, ON EDUCATIONAL GOAL AND MAJOR

| | ALL DROPOUTS FALL, 1984 N=1,569 | | | FIRST-TIME DAY DROPOUTS FALL, 1981 N=649 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | RANK | N | %[a] | RANK |
| EDUCATIONAL GOAL | | | | | | |
| 1. Transfer | 122 | 7.8 | 6 | 50 | 34.7 | 6 |
| 2. Transfer w/ AA or AS | 270 | 17.2 | 3 | 104 | 21.6 | 8 |
| 3. AA or AS - Vacational | 153 | 9.9 | 5 | 69 | 32.7 | 5 |
| 4. AA or AS - Gen Ed | 158 | 10.1 | 4 | 72 | 28.2 | 7 |
| 5. Certificate | 80 | 5.1 | 7 | 40 | 40.0 | 4 |
| 6. Upgrade job skills | 351 | 22.4 | 2 | 99 | 51.8 | 2 |
| 7. Recreational/Personal | 363 | 23.14 | 1 | 163 | 62.5 | 1 |
| 8. Other | 71 | 4.5 | 8 | 51 | 44.0 | 3 |
| MAJORS | | | | | | |
| 1. 2-Year | 1,042[b] | 71.3 | | 494 | 43.6 | |
| 2. 4-Year | 282 | 19.3 | | 154 | 24.6 | |

[a] Percent of original 1,760 students by classification within the category (Appendix A).
[b] 138 students (9.4%) had a major coded as a 2 or 4 year major for a of 1,462 records.

a two-year major and indicated they would take one or more semester to complete their goal.

The modal profile of the Fall 1981, first-time, day student who failed to enroll for the Spring 1982 semester had declared a two-year major, is a middle aged female, Hispanic or Caucasian, pursuing a recreational/ personal or upgrading of job skills goal. The student enrolled in and completed fewer courses and units (1 course and approximately 3 units) and earned a lower grade point average.

The 1984 dropout population shows amazing similarity to the 1981 group in the categories of sex, age, ethnicity, educational goal, units attempted, and major. These similarities exist even though the populations surveyed are quite different. This leads to the speculation that irrespective of the differing characteristics of the local populations, those withdrawing are substantially the same as defined above.

## Comparison of Total Enrollment and Dropouts for the Fall of 1984

In addition to the above comparisons, the Fall, 1984 semester "Selected Statistics" data from the CCFS 130 and 131 for the total (9,049) student body and all of those who completely withdrew that semester (1,569) were compared in Tables 3 and 4 to determine if the two populations differed and if so, how?

The two populations are essentially the same for the variables of sex, ethnicity, citizenship, residence, total potential hours of attendance, the number of units attempted, and those receiving veterans aid. The potential hours of positive attendance category shows that a higher percentage of the original evening credit hours were dropped even though they represented the lowest number of actual hours. Day credit hours and non-credit hours showed the lowest percentage of drop when compared to their original totals.

Differences are observed in the categories of enrollment status, student level, student type, enrollment pattern, weekly student contact hours for credit classes, and age. The differences in these categories vary from slight to great and will be discussed individually. While some classifications within a category for dropouts may have a large number, that number may be in proportion or representative of the original size of that classification-population. It is important to analyze how many persons in the original classifications drop. When done, a different result is created.

In the category of Enrollment Status, first time students withdrew at a lesser rate (7.7%) than was representative of the original enrollment for that classification. On the other hand, returning students, those who had attended Sierra College before and had a break in enrollment and were returning, withdrew at a greater rate (6%) than was representative of the total

TABLE 3

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FALL, 1984
ALL ENROLLEES COMPARED TO THOSE WHO WITHDREW OR WERE DROPPED

| | All Students $S^S$=9,049 N | % | Drop Outs $S^S$=1,569 N | % | Percent Of Original Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SEX | | | | | |
| Male | 3,992 | 44.1 | 649 | 41.4 | 16.3 |
| Female | 5,053 | 55.8 | 920 | 58.6 | 18.2 |
| Unknown | 4 | | | | |
| TOTAL | 9,049 | | 1,569 | | |
| RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORIES | | | | | |
| American Indian | 154 | 1.7 | 27 | 1.7 | 17.5 |
| Asian | 124 | 1.4 | 14 | .9 | 11.3 |
| Black | 56 | .6 | 12 | .8 | 21.4 |
| White | 8,255 | 91.2 | 1,439 | 91.7 | 17.4 |
| Hispanic | 359 | 4.0 | 69 | 4.4 | 19.2 |
| Filipino | 18 | .2 | 2 | .1 | 11.1 |
| Other | 82 | .9 | 6 | .4 | 7.3 |
| Unknown | 1 | | | | |
| CITIZENSHIP | | | | | |
| USA | 8,858 | 97.9 | 1,542 | 98.3 | 17.4 |
| Foreign | 147 | 1.6 | 20 | 1.3 | 13.6 |
| Immigrant | | | | | |
| Parolee | 1 | | | | |
| Student | 6 | .1 | | | |
| Other | | | | | |
| Unknown | 37 | .4 | 7 | .4 | 18.9 |
| RESIDENCE | | | | | |
| Dist. Residence | 7,079 | 78.2 | 1,269 | 80.9 | 17.9 |
| Other CC District | 1,820 | 20.1 | 282 | 18.0 | 15.5 |
| Non District | 63 | .7 | 8 | .5 | 12.7 |
| Other States | 44 | .5 | 5 | .3 | 11.4 |
| Foreign | 16 | .2 | 1 | .1 | 6.3 |
| Unknown | 27 | .3 | 4 | .2 | 14.8 |
| ENROLLMENT STATUS | | | | | |
| First Time | 2,678 | 29.6 | 344 | 21.9 | 12.8 |
| First Transfer | 1,312 | 14.5 | 196 | 12.5 | 1.0 |
| Returning Transfer | 274 | 3.0 | 54 | 3.4 | 19.7 |
| Returning | 1,526 | 16.9 | 359 | 22.9 | 23.5 |
| Continuing | 3,255 | 36.0 | 610 | 38.9 | 18.7 |
| Unknown | 4 | | 6 | .4 | 150.0 |
| STUDENT LEVEL | | | | | |
| High School | 98 | 1.1 | 10 | .6 | 10.2 |
| Freshman | 6,194 | 68.4 | 1,020 | 65.0 | 16.5 |
| Sophomore | 1,206 | 13.3 | 170 | 10.8 | 14.1 |
| Other Undergrad | 527 | 5.8 | 146 | 9.3 | 27.7 |
| AA Degree | 295 | 3.3 | 62 | 4.0 | 21.0 |
| BA+ Degree | 729 | 8.1 | 161 | 10.3 | 22.1 |

TABLE 4

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FALL, 1984
ALL ENROLLEES COMPARED TO THOSE WHO WITHDREW OR WERE DROPPED

| | All Students $S^S$=9,049 N | % | Drop Outs $S^S$=1,569 N | % | Percent Of Original Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STUDENT TYPE | | | | | |
| Full-Time | 2,685 | 29.7 | 59 | 3.8 | 2.2 |
| Part-Time | 6,187 | 68.4 | 880 | 56.1 | 14.2 |
| Non-Credit | 177 | 2.0 | 630 | 40.2 | |
| ENROLLMENT PATTERN | | | | | |
| Day Credit | 3,894 | 43.0 | 9 | .6 | 0.2 |
| Day Non-Credit | 177 | 2.0 | | | |
| Both Day C and Day NC | 5 | .1 | | | |
| Day/Eve Credit | 1,476 | 16.3 | 405 | 25.8 | 27.4 |
| Day/Eve Non-Credit | | | | | |
| Both Day/Eve C and Day/Eve NC | | | 4 | .3 | |
| Evening Credit | 3,497 | 38.6 | 527 | 33.6 | 15.1 |
| Evening Non-Credit | | | | | |
| Both Eve C and Eve NC | | | | | |
| Unknown | | | 624 | 39.8 | |
| WSCH FULL TERM CREDIT CLASSES | | | | | |
| Day | 61,474 | 74.6 | 2,805 | 55.8 | 4.6 |
| Extended Day | 20,953 | 25.4 | 2,224 | 44.2 | 10.6 |
| TOTAL | 82,427 | | 5,029 | | |
| TOTAL POTENTIAL HOURS POSITIVE ATTENDANCE | | | | | |
| Day Credit | 35,877 | 44.1 | 1,190 | 48.9 | 3.3 |
| Non-Credit | 31,860 | 39.1 | 738 | 30.3 | 2.3 |
| Evening Credit | 13,679 | 16.8 | 508 | 20.8 | 3.7 |
| Non-Credit | 0 | | 0 | | |
| TOTAL | 81,416 | | 2,436 | | |
| UNITS ATTEMPTED | | | | | |
| Full Term | 61,642 (AV 6.95) | 94.3 | 3,967 | 95.9 (AV 4.23) | 6.4 |
| Positive Attendance | 1,716 | 2.6 | 62 | 1.5 | 3.6 |
| Not Used | | | | | |
| ITV | 544 | .8 | 27 | .7 | 5.0 |
| Apprenticeship | | | | | |
| Independent Study | 1,036 | 1.6 | 71 | 1.7 | 6.9 |
| Work Experience | 401 | .7 | 8 | .2 | 2.0 |
| TOTAL | 65,339 | (AV 7.37) | 4,135 | (AV 4.4) | |
| VETERANS AID | | | | | |
| No Veterans Aid | 8,848 | 97.8 | 1,557 | 99.0 | 17.6 |
| Veterans | 170 | 1.9 | 14 | .9 | 8.2 |
| Dependents | 31 | .3 | 1 | | 3.2 |
| Unknown | | | | | |

enrollment. In terms of total numbers continuing students withdrew at a greater rate than any other classification.

When comparing the dropouts to the original number of students within classifications, returning and returning transfer student classifications had a higher percent who withdrew (24 and 20 respectively) even though the total number of students was smaller. When looking at the data in this manner, and we should, the propensity to drop becomes greater with returning students, then continuing, first time transfers, and finally by first time students.

Slight shifts took place in the percentages for classifications within the category of Student Level. Of the 1,569 students who withdrew, fewer freshmen (3.4%) and sophomores (2.5%) withdrew than did other undergraduates with 60 or more units and no degree (3.5%) or than those with Associate or Bachelor degrees (2.9%).

However, when compared to the original enrollment by each classification with that category, high school advance placement students had the highest retention rate followed by sophomores and then freshmen. Other undergraduates and those with degrees had the greatest percentage of dropouts when compared to the original enrollments in those classifications.

The Student Type category has data reported in such a manner as to distort any comparative value. The computer program report shows "noncredit" enrollments for those enrolled in noncredit courses only. It also reports those who were enrolled but dropped before first census as "noncredit" enrollees. It is possible a larger number of those who withdrew were day students and had a full-time program (12 or more units) than were represented in the report. Therefore, the 630 "noncredit" dropouts is misleading since it represents both those who enrolled in noncredit courses as well as those who were in credit courses but withdrew before first census.

It is theorized that the more committed (involved) a student is to his or her college program, involvement being directly a proportionate to the number of units of enrollment, the more apt the student is to remain in college. The greater the student commitment, the greater the retention. If the reported figures are truly representative of units taken, and taken at face value, the findings would support such a contention. Only three and eight-tenths of those who withdrew were full-time students (12 or more units) compared to the 29.7 percent represented in the total enrollment. This is a difference of 25.9 percent. Fifty-six percent of the dropouts were part-time students compared to 68.4 percent of the total population for a difference of 12.3 percent. Part-time students were also the largest group when compared to their original cohorts.

The Enrollment Pattern category gives cause for concern due to the dramatic differences between the original enrollment of 3,894 "Day Credit" students and the dropout population for that classification of nine students. The 42.4 percent difference gives way to immediate concern for the validity of reported data. Subsequent attempts to decertify these results were futile. In view of the uncertainty of the validity of these figures, they show greatest attrition numbers come from the part-time evening student or the part-time student who has a combination of full-term day and evening courses.

It must be remembered, that 630 students who withdrew are listed as either "noncredit" or "unknown". These two categories may have contained full-time day students who had dropped before first census. Again, the total enrollment statistic represents 9,049 students who were enrolled as of first census, Monday of the fourth week of school. The dropout report represents all students who enrolled and dropped out, even those before first census. It does not represent only those who dropped out after first census.

More of the total weekly student contact hours (WSCH) are lost in day classes than evening. Whereas with the total student body day WSCH represents 74.6 percent of the hours, the day WSCH for the dropout group represented 55.8 percent of the total dropout hours or 4.6 percent when compared to the original hours in that classification. Again, this is indicative of a greater

number of evening students withdrawing as shown by the relationship of extended day drop hours compared to the original number of hours.

The positive attendance hours for noncredit and short-term classes (Table 4, Total Potential Hours of Attendance) for the dropout group follows the same pattern as for the total enrollment with 79.2 percent of the hours generated by day courses. The major differences between WSCH and positive attendance hours are seen when comparing the figures for both groups. The hours for the total population in each group are almost the same (82,427 to 81,415) but the dropout WSCH is twice as large as the positive attendance hours. This is largely due to the greater number of WSCH courses offered. When compared to their original total enrollment, the greatest attrition occurred in the extended day/evening hours for both WSCH and positive attendance. The lost 5,029 WSCH for the Fall term alone amounted to 150 ADA. At $2,500 per ADA, this would be a loss in revenue of $375,000.

As seen with hours, the majority of unit attrition was in the full-term classification. When compared to the original enrollment, Independent Study had the highest attrition rate (6.9%) followed by full-time unit enrollment (6.4%) and then Instructional Television units (5%).

The total number of units attempted for all students and the dropouts are virtually the same in each classification with the exception of a slightly less drop in positive attendance units. The average number of units carried by all students was 6.95 and 4.23 for those who withdrew. When students who are enrolled in noncredit courses only are removed from both groups, the average number of units for each is significantly different. The total population averaged 7.37 units per student whereas the dropout group averaged 4.4. Again, this shows attrition takes place mainly with those taking fewer units, approximately three units less than all students enrolled at first census.

Students receiving Veterans Aid exhibited lower attrition rates than those receiving no aid. Most recipients of veteran benefits are also full-time students with a commitment to complete their courses.

When the age distribution (Table 5) of the dropouts is reviewed, it is important to note that the dropout rate increased for each classification from age 21 to 54, with one slight exception at age 45-49. Those under 18 to 20 years of age and those 55 and older all had lower attrition rates when compared to their cohorts in the total enrollment column. Those under 18 to 20 and 55 and older represented only 24 percent of the attrition but 35.7 percent of the total enrollment. A comparison of the dropouts to their cohort age groups shows a high dropout rate in

the age bracket from 25 to 44 with much lower rates in the 18 and under to 20 year old group.

TABLE 5

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT
COMPARED TO DROPOUTS FALL, 1984

| | 1984 $S^S$=9,049 N | % | Dropouts $S^S$=1,569 N | % | % Compared to Original Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DISTRIBUTION BY AGE | | | | | |
| Under 18 | 143 | 1.6 | 17 | 1.1 | 11.9 |
| Age 18 | 1,008 | 11.1 | 102 | 6.5 | 10.1 |
| Age 19 | 974 | 10.8 | 95 | 6.1 | 9.8 |
| Age 20 | 682 | 7.5 | 89 | 5.7 | 13.0 |
| Age 21 | 513 | 5.7 | 98 | 6.2 | 19.1 |
| Age 22 | 339 | 3.7 | 61 | 3.9 | 18.0 |
| Age 23 | 301 | 3.3+ | 57 | 3.6 | 18.9 |
| Age 24 | 270 | 3.0 | 64 | 4.1 | 23.7 |
| Age 25 | 241 | 2.7 | 59 | 3.8 | 24.5 |
| Age 26 | 245 | 2.7 | 61 | 3.9 | 24.9 |
| Age 27 | 251 | 2.8 | 52 | 3.3 | 20.7 |
| Age 28 | 216 | 2.4 | 44 | 2.8 | 20.4 |
| Age 29 | 214 | 2.4 | 45 | 2.9 | 21.0 |
| Age 30 - 34 | 1,110 | 12.3+ | 247 | 15.7 | 22.3 |
| Age 35 - 39 | 862 | 9.5+ | 181 | 11.5 | 21.0 |
| Age 40 - 44 | 634 | 7.0+ | 118 | 7.5 | 18.6 |
| Age 45 - 49 | 383 | 4.2+ | 61 | 3.9 | 15.9 |
| Age 50 - 54 | 240 | 2.7 | 48 | 3.1 | 20.0 |
| Age 55 - 59 | 179 | 2.0 | 25 | 1.6 | 14.0 |
| Age 60 - 64 | 120 | 1.3 | 24 | 1.6 | 20.0 |
| Age 65 - 69 | 63 | .7 | 14 | .9 | 22.2 |
| Over 69 | 61 | .7 | 7 | .5 | 11.5 |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Students between the ages of 25 and 44 accounted for 51.4 percent of those who completely withdrew and 62.7 percent of them were women. Twenty-seven percent of that group was in the 30 to

39 age bracket where 66.8 percent were women. These figures reinforce other findings that the dropout group tends to be middle aged with a large percent of women and that younger students, under 18 to 20, have higher retention rates than those in the 30 to 39 age group. Of the under 18 to 20 year old dropout group, only 49.7 were women.

The effective dates of student withdrawals were plotted and analyzed to see if a particular pattern or patterns evidenced themselves (Table 6 and Illustrations 1, 2, and 3). It seems there is a relationship between selected and important events and withdrawals. They are August 27 and 28, when program changes were allowed before the opening of school. Thirty-six students withdrew at this time. The date when the largest number withdrew was Wednesday, September 5, the first day of school, when 265 students, 18 percent of the total semester withdrawals, left the college. It is speculated these students may have represented those who had enrolled in the preceding spring or summer and transferred, decided not to continue, got a job, or were unable to get the course or courses they wished.

TABLE 6

MONTHLY NUMBER AND PERCENT OF WITHDRAWALS

| Month | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| May | 1 | 0.1 |
| June | 4 | 0.3 |
| July | 15 | 1.0 |
| August | 68 | 4.7 |
| September | 584 | 39.9 |
| October | 319 | 21.8 |
| November | 468 | 32.0 |
| December | 1 | .1 |

The second and third weeks of the semester show high attrition rates with increased activity near the last day when students may register or add courses. It is known that some of these withdrawals represent students who were unable to get a specific course(s) and withdrew completely. As noted earlier, approximately 630 (40.2%) students withdrew before first census which is Monday of the fourth week of the semester.

During the month of October, the attrition rate remained fairly constant with approximately 13 students a day withdrawing. It does not appear that midterms scheduled from October 29 to November 2 had any impact on attrition unless it shows later in the month of November. As will be seen later, poor grades did not appear to be a major reason for leaving college.

The month of November has a bimodal distribution with increased attrition centering around second census and the

deadline to withdraw or be dropped from any class. In both instances, it has been observed that at this time faculty purge from their rolls those who have not been attending their classes.

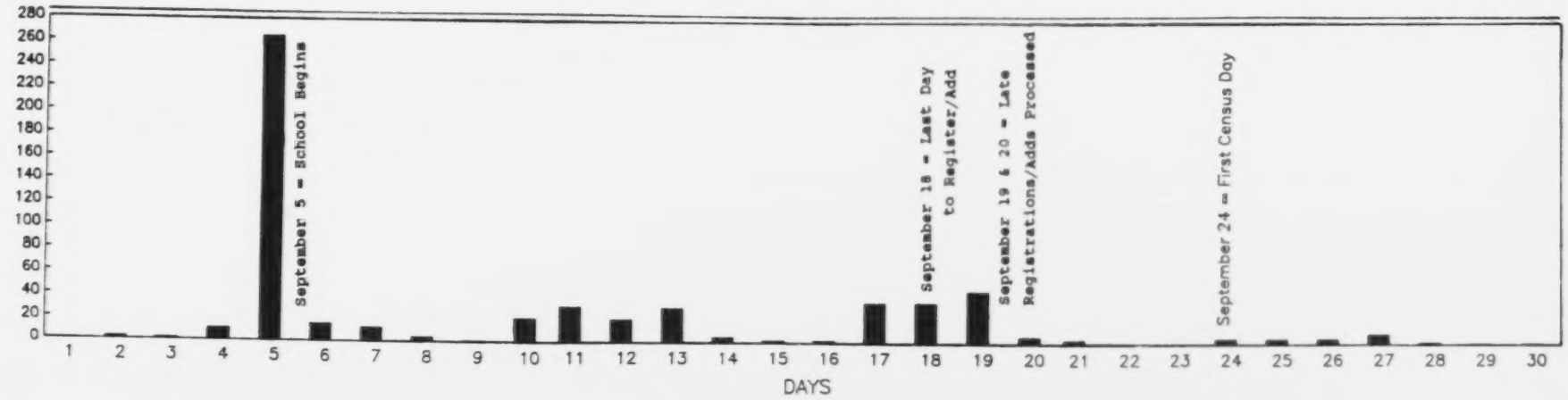
It is of value to note that approximately 40 percent of all the withdrawals occurred in the first two and a half weeks of the semester. Eighteen percent of these were accounted for on the first day of the term. There is going to be some attrition each semester. It behooves the District to understand the reasons so many withdrew so early and what type of action or intervention plans can be implemented to reduce the attrition. As an example, if students withdraw because they cannot get the courses or program they want, can that be remedied? This study supports the contention that a large number of dropouts are "casual" students and no action plan would have had much of an impact on averting their decision to leave school. In addition, retention efforts need to take this into account so resources can be allocated where the greatest promise for the maximum good can be realized.

Of the 1,569 dropout student records for the Fall of 1984, 1,462 were able to be read and processed and revealed 1,042 (71% of 1,462) had declared a two-year major and 282 (19%) a four-year major on their application. One-hundred and thirty-eight declared majors that are classified as both.

The largest two-year major was represented by General Studies (571 or 39%) which usually indicates no major listed or

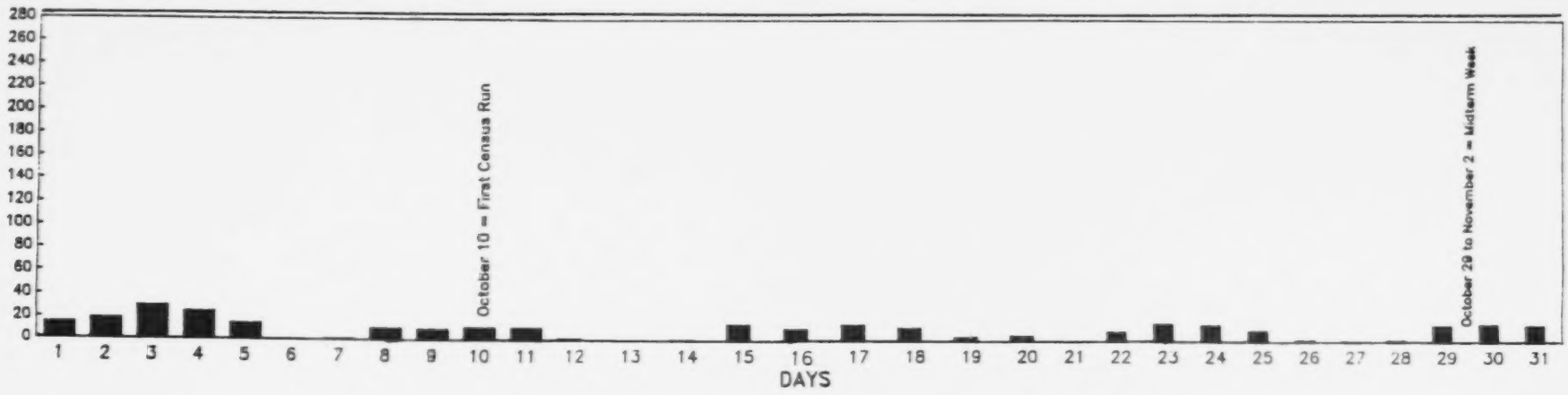
## ILLUSTRATION 1

NUMBER AND DATE OF WITHDRAWALS
FALL 1984
MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
584 (39.9%) OF TOTAL



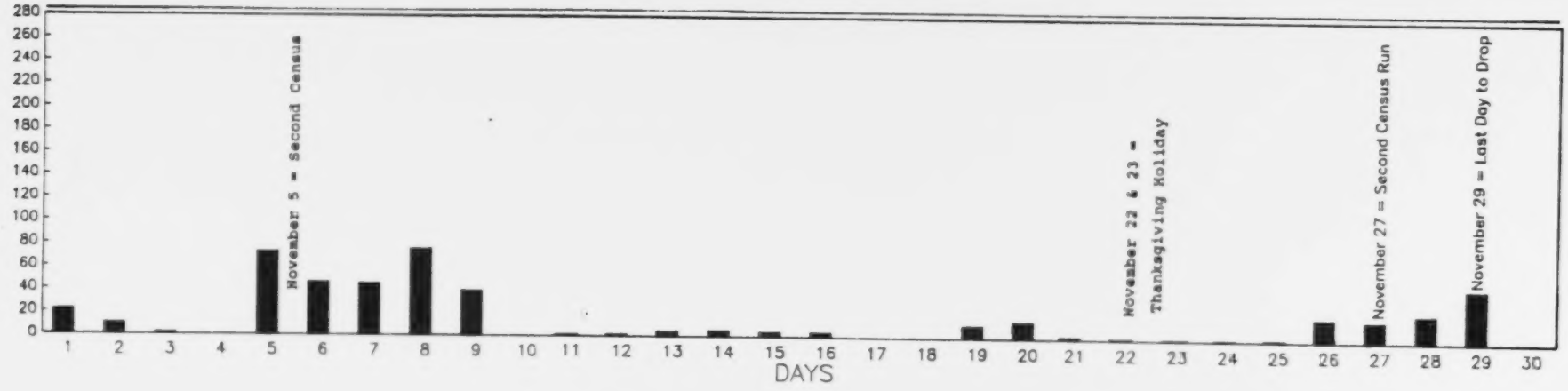
## ILLUSTRATION 2

NUMBER AND DATE OF WITHDRAWALS
FALL 1984
MONTH OF OCTOBER
319 (21.8%) OF TOTAL



## ILLUSTRATION 3

NUMBER AND DATE OF WITHDRAWALS
FALL 1984
MONTH OF NOVEMBER
468 (32%) OF TOTAL



uncertainty on the part of the student. General Business (89 students), Electronics (50 students), Management (20 students), Marketing (16 students), Accounting (66 students), Vocational Nursing (38 students), and Drafting-Building Construction (15 students), were the other major areas.

Four-year majors of significance were Art (17), Pre-Medicine (16), and Business Administration (33). Majors with less than 15 declarations were not reported in this study.

Majors coded as both two- and four- year were Computer Science (94), Administration of Justice (33), Liberal Arts (30), and Child Development (21). With the exception of Liberal Arts, the majority of these students were declaring a two-year major. It is suggested the major codes for these majors be re-evaluated and modified to more accurately reflect the two- or four-year intent of the student.

Of the 1,462 dropouts, 126 (8.6%) had last attended a campus of the California State University system, 35 (2.4%) a University of California campus, and 296 (20.3%) last attended another Community College other than Sierra College. Sixty-six (4.5%) had last attended Sierra College and 33 (2.3%) last attended an out of state college. Those who had not attended any college at all numbered 791 students or 54 percent of the group.

The last institutions attended by the largest number of students were: 1) American River College (97); 2) Sierra College (66); 3) California State University, Sacramento (56); 4) San Jose State University (15); 5) Sacramento City College (14); 6) University of California, Berkeley (14), 7) University of California, Davis (13); 8) Yuba College (10); 9) San Jose City College (10); and 10) unknown Utah colleges (10). As was found in a study of the Los Rios District, there is a great deal of transferring taking place among community colleges. In this instance, 8 percent of those who dropped out had last attended a Los Rios District campus and 13.5 percent of the total had last attended another community college.

When 1,462 dropout students' records were read to determine where they intended to transfer, it was found that 1,235 (85%) declared no such intention. The four largest numbers of transfer declarations were to California State University, Sacramento (69), American River College (29), and California State University, Chico (16). The balance of the students were fairly well distributed between University of California, Davis, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, other California State University campuses, and private colleges and universities. It is worthwhile to note that 87 (6%) of the students had declared an intention to transfer to another community college.

Students were asked when they had last attended Sierra College. Records showed that some had attended as far back as

the Fall of 1960. The largest group (685 students or 47%) had applied and attended in the Fall of 1984. The next largest group were those who applied and last attended in the Spring of 1984 (177), followed by those in the Fall of 1983 (145), and then the Fall of 1982 (71). The data showed that the students consistently applied and attended in greater numbers in Fall semesters than Spring. This suggests "casual" students are more inclined to start in the Fall rather than the Spring term. Of the 1,462, almost 60 percent had applied, attended, and withdrawn within a one year span of time (Spring and Fall of 1984).

The last high school of attendance for the 1,462 students were Nevada Union (83), Placer (78), Oakmont (66), Roseville (61), Del Oro (57), Bella Vista (31), Lincoln (25), Casa Roble (25), Colfax (19), San Juan (17), Grant (13), Tahoe-Truckee (13), and North Tahoe (4). These figures need to be compared to the total number of enrollees from the respective high schools to determine if attrition from feeder high schools differs. If so, to what degree, and for what reasons? It is possible commuting is a factor or students have transferred. Further investigation is needed to find answers to these questions.

## Fall 1984 Survey Findings

This section of the report will look more closely at the data items of those whose 429 questionnaires were returned. The number of returned and usable questionnaires amounted to 400 or 26 percent of the 1,569 mailed. Response bias was noted when more women returned the questionnaire than was represented in either the sample or total population.

The respondents' attitudes about Sierra College were very positive. Most of the students did not intend to remain in college for a long period of time. The findings are limited to the questionnaire respondents and do not necessarily represent the total population or all of those who withdrew in the Fall of 1984. Generalizations and implications must be contained within these parameters.

The questionnaire findings will be presented as single data items, e.g., gender, as well as a cross tabulations based on units. A brief description of the findings will be made leaving ample opportunity for additional analysis, conjecture, and consideration for additional study or implications.

Twenty of the 400 respondents failed to indicate how many units they took. Crosstab tables based on unit enrollments as of first census will represent 380 students only.

As seen earlier in Table 1, of the 400 respondents, 277 or 69 percent were women, of which 214 or 54 percent were married.

The crosstabs indicates 52 percent of the sample were married. Most of those married fell into the category of taking three or fewer units (26%).

TABLE 7

MARITAL STATUS COMPARED TO UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| | Units | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Total/% |
| Married | 99 | 33 | 22 | 41 | 195/52% |
| Not Married | 68 | 34 | 20 | 61 | 183/48% |

Table 1 shows Caucasians withdrew at a much greater rate (371 persons or 93%) than Hispanics (18 or 5%). Other ethnic groups were as follows: Asians and others with 3 students (1%) each; Black and "no response" with two students each; and one Filipino student. Caucasians represented 93 percent of the sample in Table 8. Slightly over 40 percent of them took three or less units, followed by those taking 12 or more units, and then those taking four to six units. There are not large enough numbers in the other cells to draw any substantive conclusions other than Hispanics were the second largest group of dropouts to

respond to the questionnaire and the percentages are consistent with those found for the total dropout population.

TABLE 8

UNITS OF ENROLLMENT AND ETHNICITY

| | Units | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Total/% |
| Caucasian | 158 | 60 | 38 | 97 | 353/93.4 |
| Hispanic | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 16/ 4.2 |
| Asian | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3/ 0.8 |
| Black | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2/ 0.5 |
| Filipino | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1/ 0.3 |
| Other | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3/ 0.8 |

As found in the 1981 study, the dropout group is represented primarily by Caucasians, followed by Hispanics.

The 1981 study also showed a mean as well as modal profile to show the dropout group was primarily middle aged. Table 9 is representative of the distribution of dropouts by age. Students who were 26 and older represented 69 percent of the total dropouts.

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS BY AGE

| | Under 18 | 18-22 | 23-25 | 26-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number | 4 | 74 | 48 | 71 | 126 | 45 | 20 | 12 |
| Percent | 1% | 19% | 12% | 18% | 32% | 11% | 5% | 3% |

The relationship between age, sex, and number of units taken was placed in a joint frequency distribution of cases or crosstabulation (Table 10). It can be seen that those taking three or fewer units withdrew at a greater rate than all other students. The next largest group to withdraw were those taking 12 or more units. It has been hypothesized that part-time students have a lessened commitment to their enrollment and are more apt to withdraw, and that full-time students withdrew because they may have transferred or found employment.

Of those taking three or less units, 31 percent of the total sample were women and 25 percent of them were found in the age group from 23 to 50 years of age. Women taking 12 or more units represented 19 percent of the total withdrawals and 16 percent of that group fell within the age categories of 18 to 40 years. As can be seen, those who are most apt to withdraw are female and middle aged. Full-time students withdraw at a lower rate than do those taking three or less units.

Forty-nine percent of the sample fell within the 26 to 40 years of age bracket. The largest number of full-time students were found in the 18 to 22 years of age bracket (8%). The largest age group for those with three or less units was from 31 to 40 years of age (17%).

Table 11 depicts the length of attendance at Sierra College by units of enrollment. Thirty-three percent of the students reported having attended less than one semester. This is in contrast to 37 percent who reported they had attended one or two years prior to their withdrawal. While 189 students (47%) attended for one semester or less, the balance had attended for one or more years prior to withdrawing. Fifteen percent (60 students) had attended for three or more years.

While one-third of the sample attended less than one semester, another one-third (34.2%) had attended Sierra College for two or more years. Perhaps students from this latter group may have had a higher rate of transfer or a larger number who completed their degree or educational goal and cancelled a prior semester registration. The average length of attendance for those responding to the questionnaire was almost three semesters (2.4 semesters). Even though 48 percent of the sample attended one semester or less, the balance of respondents attended enough semesters to generate an average of attendance of over one year prior to withdrawing.

TABLE 10

AGE OF DROPOUTS BY UNITS CARRIED AND SEX
FALL 1984

| | | -18 | 18-22 | 23-25 | 26-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61+ | Total/% | Grand Total/% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 Units | Male | 1 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 47/12 | 168/43 |
| | Female | 1 | 8 | 19 | 25 | 46 | 12 | 7 | 3 | 121/31 | |
| 4-6 Units | Male | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 22/ 6 | 67/ 18 |
| | Female | 0 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 45/12 | |
| 7-11 Units | Male | 1 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 19/ 5 | 42/ 11 |
| | Female | 0 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 23/ 6 | |
| 12+ Units | Male | 0 | 15 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 31/ 8 | 103/ 27 |
| | Female | 0 | 16 | 11 | 14 | 20 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 72/19 | |
| Totals/% | Male | 3 | 31 | 12 | 19 | 32 | 14 | 4 | 4 | 119/31 | 380/100 |
| | Female | 1 | 42 | 36 | 48 | 88 | 26 | 16 | 4 | 261/ 69 | |

TABLE 11

LENGTH OF ATTENDANCE TIME AT SIERRA COLLEGE BY UNITS

| | Units | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Others | Total/% |
| Less than 1 Semester | 66 | 20 | 17 | 22 | 7 | 132/33.4 |
| 1 Semester | 27 | 11 | 7 | 12 | 0 | 57/14.4 |
| 1 Year | 24 | 15 | 8 | 19 | 5 | 71/18.0 |
| 2 Years | 22 | 11 | 7 | 34 | 1 | 75/19.0 |
| 3 Years | 5 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 19/ 4.8 |
| 3+ Years | 20 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 41/10.3 |

Question number 6 of the survey asked students to indicate what academic, career, and personal goals were important to them and which ones they are achieving or have achieved. Table 12 shows the results of responses. It was possible to have more than one choice for either of the two options. A total number of responses for the 21 choices for each option was established and used to determine the number of goals students declared as important and the "Coefficient of Success" of meeting those goals.

The coefficient of success is determined by dividing the total number of responses for goals being achieved or had been met (1,110) by the number of responses indicating the goal was important. A coefficient success of 0.65 was attained for all 21 criteria (1,110 - 1,699) by the students prior to withdrawing. This is phenomenal considering that 47 percent attended Sierra

College for one semester or less before withdrawing. Perhaps, some of these students' goals were met in less than a full semester. A crosstabs of success ratios by length of attendance was not performed and should be in future studies. Success ratios for each of the 21 items have been calculated and are also presented with Table 12.

Success ratios can be used as indicators of where the college is meeting student goals or needs as well as areas where improvement is needed. It is important to note the larger number of responses for the goals to determine which are of highest priority to our students.

When the number of responses as to the importance for any one of the goals is divided by the number of students responding to the questionnaire (400), one can see what percentage of the respondents consider a particular goal to be of importance or not. As an example, 105 students listed transfer to a 4-year college with an AA or AS Degree as important. This represents 26 percent of the total group (105 ÷ 400).

As can be seen from Table 12, the goal with the highest number of responses, 175 or 44 percent of the sample, was that of improving knowledge, technical skills, and/or competencies for a job or career. This was followed by the need to upgrade job skills (39 percent) followed by taking courses for recreational/ personal enrichment (35.5%) and then a tie between discovering

TABLE 12

GOALS CONSIDERED TO BE IMPORTANT AND THOSE THAT WERE BEING ACHIEVED OR HAD BEEN MET [a]

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Important | 105 | 35 | 84 | 55 | 7 | 50 | 156 | 142 | 10 | 135 | 135 |
| Met | 44 | 20 | 29 | 25 | 9 | 31 | 113 | 102 | 3 | 85 | 81 |
| Success Ratio | .42 | .57 | .35 | .46 | 1.29 | .62 | .72 | .72 | .30 | .63 | .60 |

| | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Important | 175 | 74 | 84 | 18 | 36 | 34 | 92 | 127 | 127 | 18 | 1699 |
| Met | 125 | 49 | 58 | 14 | 14 | 20 | 79 | 89 | 108 | 12 | 1110 |
| Success Ratio | .71 | .66 | .69 | .78 | .39 | .59 | .86 | .70 | .85 | .67 | .65 |

[a] GOALS:

ACADEMIC

A. 4 Year Transfer W/AA-AS
B. 4 Year Transfer WO/AA-AS
C. Vocational AA-AS
D. General Education AA-AS
E. Transfer to Another CC
F. Earn a Certificate
G. Upgrade Job Skills
H. Recreational/Personal Enrichment
I. Make-up Courses for Grade Points for Transfers

CAREER

J. Discover Career/Occupation Interest
K. New Career Preparation
L. Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills and/or Competencies for Job or Career
M. Improve Chance for Raise or Promotion
N. Develop Skills and/or Knowledge to Get a Job
O. Other

SOCIAL-CULTURAL-PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

P. Participate in Student Life and College Activities
Q. Participate in Cultural and/or Social Events
R. Meet People
S. Increase Self-Confidence
T. Develop Ability to be Independent and Self-Reliant
U. Other

career/occupation interests and preparation for a new career (34%). Ranked fifth was another tie between the need to increase self confidence and the desire to develop an ability to be dependent and self-reliant. The last item to have more than 100 responses and ranked fifth was that of transferring to a four-year college with an AA or AS Degree. As seen in goals A and B in Table 12, 64 of the 400 (16%) respondents indicated they met their goal to transfer to a four-year college with or without an AA or AS Degree. These are in contrast to the goals of transferring to another community college and making up grade points for transfer, which seemed to be of little importance to this group of respondents. Students listed more career-preparation goals as being important (621 responses), followed by social/cultural/personal-development and enrichment goals (434 responses), and then academic goals with 258 responses.

Table 13 displayed the academic, career, and social/cultural/personal goals according to units of enrollment. The highest success ratio was generated by those taking 12 or more units (77.9), followed by those taking four to six units (69.8), and then those enrolled in three or less units (62.8). The lowest success ratio was generated by those enrolled in seven to 11 units (45.8). They were 17 points from the tables' mean of 65.3.

Each goal can be analyzed for importance and success ratio by units of enrollment. Since students were allowed multiple

choices, it was possible a goal could have been recorded as met when not recorded as important. An example of this can be seen in goal "T", develop ability and self-reliance, for those with 12 or more units. Forty-one students were achieving or had achieved that goal while only 39 recorded it as important. It is suggested the success ratios found in Table 12 be used as a guide to determine which goals might be analyzed according to units of enrollment. Table 13 can serve as an easy reference to goals by units. There are too many individual goal-unit value cells (84) to analyze. However, some that deserve attention because of the number of responses and coefficients of success are indicated by asterisks.

Question number nine of the survey asks the students to rank the three most important goals listed in question six by most important, second most important, and third most important. Table 14 lists the number of responses for each of the three choices plus a total and percent of all responses for each of the 21 items.

A crosstab table listing the rankings of student goals by units of enrollment is displayed in Table 15 and is useful in ascertaining which goals within each category are important. Once ranked, comparisons between unit categories can be made to determine if the importance of different goals can be seen between the groups. As an example, recreation and personal enrichment is the highest ranking goal followed closely by the

TABLE 13

GOALS CONSIDERED TO BE IMPORTANT AND THOSE
THAT WERE BEING ACHIEVED OR HAD BEEN MET BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT [a]

| | | ACADEMIC | | | | | | | | | CAREER | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O |
| 1. 3 or Less Units | Important | 37 | 4 | 33 | 19 | 3 | 17 | 77 | 75 | 2 | 53 | 51 | 78 | 31 | 31 | 8 |
| | Met | 11 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 12* | 55 | 48 | 0 | 32 | 21 | 51 | 23* | 18 | 8 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | Important | 17 | 3 | 20 | 13 | 2 | 15 | 28 | 20 | 2 | 20 | 24 | 33 | 15 | 14 | 4 |
| | Met | 8 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 20* | 21* | 1 | 14 | 17* | 24* | 9 | 9 | 1 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | Important | 16 | 7 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 16 | 10 | 3 | 20 | 19 | 19 | 10 | 9 | 0 |
| | Met | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| 4. 12+ Units | Important | 34 | 21 | 19 | 17 | 2 | 10 | 30 | 22 | 3 | 36 | 38 | 37 | 17 | 27 | 3 |
| | Met | 22* | 11 | 13* | 10 | 3 | 9 | 24* | 18* | 1 | 31* | 34* | 32* | 8 | 27 | 1 |

| | | SOCIAL-CULTURAL-PERSONAL | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | P | Q | R | S | T | U | Total | % |
| 1. 3 or Less Units | Important | 16 | 8 | 35 | 51 | 47 | 9 | 685 | |
| | Met | 8 | 7 | 28* | 37 | 36* | 7 | 430 | 62.8 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | Important | 4 | 7 | 12 | 22 | 21 | 4 | 300 | |
| | Met | 1 | 4 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 4 | 198 | 69.8 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | Important | 4 | 4 | 14 | 12 | 16 | 1 | 201 | |
| | Met | 0 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 92 | 45.8 |
| 4. 12+ Units | Important | 14 | 14 | 26 | 32 | 39 | 3 | 444 | |
| | Met | 7 | 7 | 24* | 22 | 41* | 1 | 346 | 77.9 |

[a] GOALS:

ACADEMIC

A. 4 Year Transfer W/AA-AS
B. 4 Year Transfer WO/AA-AS
C. Vocational AA-AS
D. General Education AA-AS
E. Transfer to Another CC
F. Earn a Certificate
G. Upgrade Job Skills
H. Recreational/Personal Enrichment
I. Make-up Courses for Grade Points for Transfers

CAREER

J. Discover Career/Occupation Interest
K. New Career Preparation
L. Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills and/or Competencies for Job or Career
M. Improve Chance for Raise or Promotion
N. Develop Skills and/or Knowledge to Get a Job
O. Other

SOCIAL-CULTURAL-PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

P. Participate in Student Life and College Activities
Q. Participate in Cultural and/or Social Events
R. Meet People
S. Increase Self-Confidence
T. Develop Ability to be Independent and Self Reliant
U. Other

* IMPORTANT TO NOTE

upgrading of job skills goal for those with three or less units. Those taking four to six units listed upgrading of job skills as their highest ranking goal. Those taking seven to 11 and 12 or more units ranked a four-year transfer with an Associate Degree as their highest goal.

Table 16 shows the ranking of the first, second, third, and the combined choices of the 400 questionnaire respondents to the 21 items. Ten percent was used as a base or minimum cut off point for inclusion of an item to be ranked. This point consistently represented a natural break in scores with the exception of the third choice row where the item of developing skills and/or knowledge to get a job accumulated nine percent of the responses and was ranked sixth. When asked to list their most important goal, transferring to a four-year college with an AA or AS Degree was the number one goal of the 400 respondents. In Table 2, the 1,569 students who withdrew in 1984 had ranked this same transfer goal as number three. Upgrading job skills and taking courses for recreational/personal reasons ranked second and third respectively for the 400 respondents. The 1,569 ranked these two goals second and first respectively. The differences in rank between the total dropout population and 400 questionnaire respondents did not vary more than one position on each item. This would indicate great similarity or consistency in the top three goals of both groups tending to reconfirm the position that the sample of 400 is more like the 1,569 population than different from them.

TABLE 14

GOALS PRIORITIZATION OF GOALS IN ITEM 6 [a]

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Most Important | 67/19% | 16/4% | 38/11% | 19/5% | 2/1% | 13/4% | 55/15% | 46/13% | 2/1% | 12/3% | 5/4% |
| Second Most Important | 11/3% | 11/3% | 15/5% | 10/3% | 3/1% | 16/5% | 42/13% | 35/11% | 3/1% | 31/10% | 37/11% |
| Third Most Important | 15/5% | 0 | 9/3% | 4/1% | 2/1% | 8/3% | 28/10% | 32/11% | 2/1% | 16/6% | 12/4% |
| Total | 93/10% | 37/4% | 62/6% | 33/6% | 7/1% | 37/4% | 125/13% | 113/12% | 7/1% | 31/3% | 64/7% |

| | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Most Important | 36/10% | 6/2% | 11/3% | 2/11% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9/3% | 3/1% | 9/3% | 361 |
| Second Most Important | 33/10% | 16/5% | 16/5% | 5/2% | 3/1% | 1/0% | 6/2% | 16/5% | 13/4% | 2/1% | 325 |
| Third Most Important | 30/10% | 14/5% | 27/9% | 3/1% | 2/1% | 3/1% | 15/5% | 31/11% | 34/12% | 5/2% | 292 |
| Total | 99/10% | 36/4% | 54/6% | 10/1% | 5/1% | 4/0% | 21/2% | 56/6% | 50/5% | 16/2% | 978 |

[a] GOALS:

ACADEMIC

A. 4 Year Transfer W/AA-AS
B. 4 Year Transfer WO/AA-0AS
C. Vocational AA-AS
D. General Education AA-AS
E. Transfer to Another CC
F. Earn a Certificate
G. Upgrade Job Skills
H. Recreational/Personal Enrichment
I. Make up Courses for Grade Points For Transfers

CAREER

J. Discover Career/Occupation Interest
K. New Career Preparation
L. Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills and/or Competencies for Job or Career
M. Improve Chance for Raise or Promotion
N. Develop Skills and/or Knowledge to Get a Job
O. Other

SOCIAL-CULTURAL-PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

P. Participate in Student Life and College Activities
Q. Participate in Cultural and/or Social Events
R. Meet People
S. Increase Self-Confidence
T. Develop Ability to be Independent and Self-Reliant
U. Other

TABLE 15

PRIORITY OF GOALS IN TABLE 14 BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT [a]

| | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 3 or Less Units | Most Important | 19 | 2 | 15 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 30 | 31 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| | 2nd Most | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 20 | 21 | 0 | 10 | 11 |
| | 3rd Most | 5 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | Most Important | 10 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| | 2nd Most | 0 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| | 3rd Most | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | Most Important | 11 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | 2nd Most | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| | 3rd Most | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. 12+ Units | Most Important | 26 | 10 | 13 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| | 2nd Most | 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 11 | 16 |
| | 3rd Most | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 2 |

| | | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 3 or Less Units | Most Important | 17 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 154 |
| | 2nd Most | 17 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 133 |
| | 3rd Most | 16 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 10 | 4 | 119 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | Most Important | 4 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 58 |
| | 2nd Most | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 54 |
| | 3rd Most | 5 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 48 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | Most Important | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| | 2nd Most | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 33 |
| | 3rd Most | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 30 |
| 4. 12+ Units | Most Important | 12 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 99 |
| | 2nd Most | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 93 |
| | 3rd Most | 3 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 18 | 0 | 83 |

[a] GOALS:

ACADEMIC

A. 4 Year Transfer W/AA-AS
B. 4 Year Transfer WO/AA-AS
C. Vocational AA-AS
D. General Education AA-AS
E. Transfer to Another CC
F. Earn a Certificate
G. Upgrade Job Skills
H. Recreational/Personal Enrichment
I. Make-up Courses for Grade Points for Transfers

CAREER

J. Discover Career/Occupation Interest
K. New Career Preparation
L. Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills and/or Competencies for Job or Career
M. Improve Chance for Raise or Promotion
N. Develop Skills and/or Knowledge to Get a Job
O. Other

SOCIAL-CULTURAL-PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

P. Participate in Student Life and College Activities
Q. Participate in Cultural and/or Social Events
R. Meet People
S. Increase Self-Confidence
T. Develop Ability to be Independent and Self Reliant
U. Other

These findings are reinforced by those found in Table 12 where it was found that the most important academic goals listed by the students were the upgrading of job skills, taking courses for personal/recreational enrichment, and transferring to a four-year institution with an AA or AS Degree. When all choices were combined, the improvement of knowledge, technical skills, and competencies became the third highest preference with transfer being fourth.

When asked to indicate their major while attending Sierra College, of the 400 records, 337 (84.3% of 400) declared a two-year major. Of these, 53 (13%) were unspecified and 63 (16%) were General Studies. The largest number of two-year majors fell into the business oriented categories of General Business (48), Management (10), Accounting (34), and Computer Studies (26). Electronics (16), Vocational Nursing (19), and Child Development (9) were the other significant two-year majors. These figures are representative of the largest areas of enrollment by major for the total population.

Four-year majors of note were Mathematics (11), and Biological Sciences (8). Other four-year majors represented a range of declarations from one to seven and were widely distributed.

Ninety-one percent of the respondents (347) indicated Sierra College was their first choice of colleges (Table 17). Twenty-

TABLE 16

RANKINGS AND PERCENTS OF 21 GOALS

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Most Important | 4-Year Transfer W/AA-AS (19%) | Upgrade Job Skills (15%) | Recreational/ Personal Enrichment (13%) | Vocational AA/AS (11%) | Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills, and Competencies (10%) |
| Second Most Important | Upgrade Job Skills (13%) | New Career Preparation (11%) | Recreational/ Personal Enrichment (11%) | Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills and Competencies (10%) | |
| Third Most Important | Develop Independence, Self-Reliance (12%) | Recreational/ Personal Enrichment (11%) | Increase Self-Confidence (11%) | Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills and Competencies (10%) | Upgrade Job Skills (10%) |
| Combined | Upgrade Job Skills (13%) | Recreational/ Personal Enrichment (12%) | Improve Knowledge, Technical Skills and Competencies (10%) | 4-Year Transfer W/AA-AS (10%) | |

TABLE 17

STUDENT'S CHOICE OF COLLEGE BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| | | Units | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Other [a] | Total |
| 1. Was Sierra College First Choice: | Yes | 152 | 61 | 34 | 87 | 13 | 347 |
| | No | 9 | 5 | 7 | 13 | 2 | 36 |
| 2. If No, First Choice Was: | Public Community College | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 13 |
| | Public 4-Year College | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| | Public 4-Year University | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 7 |
| | Vocational/ Technical School | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | Other | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

[a] Units Not Reported

eight of the remaining 36 (there were 17 non-respondents), indicated another Community College, a State College, or University campus respectively as their first choice. Though few indicated a college preference other than Sierra College, the majority of those who did preferred another Community College.

When queried about their former education prior to enrolling at Sierra College (question number seven), 202 of the 400 students (51%) had attended college before. Eighty-four (21%) had already completed an Associate or higher degree (Table 18). The largest single group was composed of those with a high school diploma and no former college education.

TABLE 18

EDUCATION PRIOR TO ENROLLING AT SIERRA COLLEGE

| High School | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| Not a high school graduate | 10 | 2.5 |
| High School Proficiency, GED, Certificate | 20 | 5.0 |
| High School Diploma | 164 | 41.0 |
| Prior college attendance-no degree | 118 | 29.5 |
| Completed AA/AS but no other degree | 19 | 4.7 |
| Completed BA/BS degree | 52 | 13.0 |
| Completed degree higher than BA/BS | 13 | 3.2 |
| No response | 4 | 1.0 |

Table 19 seems to confirm that those who have had prior college work including degrees, are attending college on a "casual" or part-time basis. Ninety-three (23%) of those with

three or less units had prior college work while those taking 12 or more units had proportionately less college work and more of them had a high school diploma.

A "casual student" for the purpose of this study is defined as one who is attending Sierra College on a part-time basis with no intention to transfer. He or she is already involved in other activities with greater commitment and importance prior to course enrollment. As examples, they may be working full-time or caring for a family. These students are contrasted to the full-time student taking 12 or more units, is usually younger and single, attending day classes, and working part-time. They place the commitment or importance of college higher than, or at least in relationship to, other activities.

TABLE 19

FORMER EDUCATION BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| | Units | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ |
| Non H.S. Graduate | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| H.S. Equivalency | 9 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| H.S. Diploma | 61 | 32 | 20 | 44 |
| Other College/ No Degree | 38 | 18 | 14 | 40 |
| AA/AS Degree | 9 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| BA/BS Degree | 39 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| Higher Than BA/BS Degree | 7 | 4 | 0 | 1 |

One hundred fifty-nine of the students, (40%) indicated they intended to transfer to another college (question number eight). Most of these students indicated a California State University campus as their intended transfer institution, followed by a University of California campus (Table 20 and 21). The 400 respondents had a much lower percent indicating a non-transfer goal (60%) than the total group of 1,569 dropouts (85%). Those intending to transfer to the University of California system were much higher in the survey sample (12.7% versus 1%) than in the total dropout population. All other categories were relatively equal.

Further analysis needs to be done to determine if the 163 students who said they intend to transfer to a four-year institution list a four-year major, since only 82 of the total respondents specified a four-year major. Further tracking is necessary to determine which of these students declared a transfer college. Of the 400, only 24 listed a transfer college and ten of those American River College.

TABLE 20

TRANSFER INTENTION AND INSTITUTION

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Intend to transfer | 163 | 40.3 |
| Do not intend to transfer | 239 | 59.7 |
| Another Community College | 25 | 6.3 |
| California State College campus | 68 | 17.0 |
| University of California campus | 51 | 12.7 |
| Private college | 7 | 1.7 |
| Other | 10 | 2.5 |

TABLE 21

INTENDED TRANSFER INSTITUTION BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| | Units | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Others [a] |
| Another C. C. | 3 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 2 |
| State College | 22 | 16 | 4 | 25 | 1 |
| U.C. Campus | 11 | 8 | 10 | 20 | 2 |
| Private College In California | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| No Transfer or No Response | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| | 126 | 36 | 21 | 43 | 15 |

[a] Units Not Reported

The students reported the number of units they carried at the beginning of the term (the values used in the crosstabs) and at the time of withdrawal (Tables 22 and 23).

TABLE 22

UNIT ENROLLMENT DIFFERENCES AT BEGINNING OF TERM AND WHEN WITHDRAWING

| Units | Beginning No / % | Withdrawing No / % | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 or less | 168/44.0 | 170/42.5 | +2 |
| 4 - 6 | 67/16.7 | 58/14.5 | -9 |
| 7 - 11 | 42/10.5 | 46/11.5 | +4 |
| 12+ | 103/25.7 | 97/24.3 | -6 |
| Total | 380 | 371 | -9 |

TABLE 23

UNIT ENROLLMENT AT BEGINNING OF TERM AND WHEN WITHDRAWING

| Beginning of Term | End of Term Units | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ |
| 3 or Less | 136 | 9 | 4 | 14 |
| 4 - 6 | 17 | 43 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 - 11 | 2 | 3 | 33 | 3 |
| 12+ | 15 | 3 | 8 | 75 |

There is an indication (Table 22) that students may have dropped one or more courses prior to complete withdrawal to account for the decrease in the 12 or more unit category and the increase in the seven to 11 unit group. The 1981 study found this to be true. It is also possible those in the four to six unit category added a short-term course to increase their total units to the six to 11 unit category. This would seem to be the

case in accounting for the increase in those taking three or less units.

It is important to note how little change took place in the reported unit loads at the beginning of the term compared to the time of withdrawal. Is it possible the respondent's recall and self-reporting is more significant in the "leveling" slight unit changes in the two figures?

Almost half of the responding dropouts were taking three or fewer units. This supports the 1981 findings and supports the theory that the lesser the commitment, e.g., fewer units of enrollment, the more apt a student is to drop out of college. This is particularly true if he or she already had or assumed an activity requiring more of a commitment than college. However, the next largest dropout group reporting were those with 12 or more units (103 students or 25.7%). As suggested earlier, it is possible some of these students pre-registered in the Spring of 1984 and either transferred to another college (64 indicated they met their transfer goal) or decided, for any number of reasons, not to return after registering. It becomes more obvious that the majority of dropouts are part-time enrollees and not representative of the full-time enrollees taking primarily day courses. It is suggested the day and evening populations are quite different and need to be treated as such. It is becoming more apparent the dropout populations, whether day or evening, have major similarities.

Using the midpoint of the range for each category of units of enrollment, and multiplying that figure by the number of students in that category, a rough estimate of the average number of units of enrollment of the respondent sample is obtained. When the units are used on a one-for-one basis as credit hours of attendance, a very conservative ADA figure can be derived. The ADA can be multiplied by $2,500 to give an idea of the revenue lost from just 26 percent (400 students) of the total number of 1,569 dropouts. Twelve was used as the multiplier for the 97 full-time students taking 12 or more units.

The 2,273 unit hours reported for the 380 of the 1,569 dropout population would result in a loss of 69 ADA or $172,500. When these figures are extrapolated and applied to all 1,569 students who withdrew, over $600,000 in revenue was lost through attrition. These figures are consistent with those found on page 22 where only the WSCH was converted to a loss of 150 ADA and $375,000.

Reported grade point averages fall largely into two groups (Tables 24 and 25). They either did not know (42%), or had a grade point between 3.0 and 4.0 (32%) for a total of 74 percent of all respondents. Only 3.5 percent or 14 students indicated having a grade point average of less than a 2.0 when they left college. It is possible a portion of the 168 students who did not know their grade point average will have grades of less than a 2.0. Table 25 shows the percent of respondents per unit

category compared to the total for each grade point category. A percent of the total for each grade point category is also provided. Analysis can compare the percent of any cell to the total percent for the particular grade point average percent.

Table 24

GRADE POINT AVERAGES AT TIME OF WITHDRAWAL

| | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| Unknown or did not have one | 168 | 42.0 |
| 1.0 or less | 3 | 0.8 |
| 1.01 - 2.0 | 11 | 2.7 |
| 2.01 - 3.0 | 71 | 17.8 |
| 3.01 - 4.0 | 128 | 32.0 |
| No response | 19 | 4.7 |

TABLE 25

GPA AT TIME OF WITHDRAWAL BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| GPA | Units | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Other | Total/% |
| Unknown | 89 | 24 | 22 | 26 | 7 | 168/44.1 |
| 1.0 or Less | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3/ 0.8 |
| 1.01-2.0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 11/ 2.9 |
| 2.01-3.0 | 20 | 15 | 9 | 25 | 2 | 71/18.6 |
| 3.01-4.0 | 47 | 23 | 10 | 46 | 2 | 128/33.6 |
| Total | 160 | 67 | 41 | 102 | 11 | 381 |
| Total % | 42.0 | 17.6 | 10.8 | 26.8 | 2.9 | 100 |

While enrolled, half of the students were working full-time (36 or more hours a week) and 26 percent were not employed (Table 27). Almost two-thirds of the respondents were working 20 or more hours a week. It is suggested, those who withdraw are more inclined to be employed either on a half- or full-time basis or not at all. Ninety-five of the 400 (23.8%) worked from one to 35 hours a week. As seen in Table 27, one-half of those who withdrew were working 36 or more hours a week with 135 of them (69%) taking six or less units. Additional research needs to be undertaken to see if and what type of differences exist between the full- and part-time populations as well as the day and evening groups. It is suspected they differ significantly by age, sex, college goal, reasons for taking courses, hours worked, units of enrollment, and many other criteria.

As suggested by some research, finances may be a deterrent to enrolling in college but not a valid reason for leaving. Often, it is a socially acceptable reason given in lieu of real reasons. Table 28 shows that only 19 students applied and failed to receive financial aid. Eighty-eight percent of the sample did not even apply for financial aid. Is it because it was not needed? This tends to be partially substantiated later when reasons for leaving college are cited and possibly by some sketchy information on annual income.

TABLE 26

GPA AND PERCENT AT TIME OF WITHDRAWAL BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| GPA | Units | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less No./% | 4-6 No./% | 7-11 No./% | 12+ No./% | Other No./% | Total No./% |
| 1.0 or Less | 89/53.0 | 24/14.3 | 22/13.1 | 26/15.5 | 7/4.2 | 168/ 44.1 |
| 1.01-2.0 | 0/ .0 | 2/66.7 | 2/ .0 | 1/33.3 | 0/ .0 | 3/ .8 |
| 2.01-3.0 | 4/36.4 | 3/27.3 | 0/ .0 | 4/36.4 | 0/ .0 | 11/ 2.9 |
| 3.01-4.0 | 20/28.2 | 15/21.1 | 9/12.7 | 25/35.2 | 2/2.8 | 71/ 18.6 |
| No. response | 47/36.7 | 23/18.0 | 10/ 7.8 | 46/36.0 | 2/1.6 | 128/ 33.9 |
| Total | 160/42.0 | 67/17.6 | 41/10.8 | 102/26.8 | 11/2.9 | 381/100.0 |

TABLE 27

HOURS WORKED PER WEEK BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| Hours | Units | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Other | Total/% |
| None | 35 | 19 | 9 | 32 | 8 | 103/26.1 |
| 1-10 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 17/ 4.3 |
| 11-20 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 1 | 32/ 8.1 |
| 21-35 | 20 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 1 | 46/11.7 |
| 36+ | 97 | 38 | 15 | 41 | 5 | 196/49.7 |

TABLE 28

WAS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SOUGHT AT SIERRA COLLEGE

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| No | 349 | 87.2 |
| Yes, but did not receive it | 19 | 4.7 |
| Yes, and received it | 27 | 6.7 |
| No response | 5 | 1.2 |

TABLE 29

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL AID BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| Application Status | Units | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ | Others[a] | Total/% |
| Did Not Apply | 159 | 58 | 34 | 81 | 17 | 349/87.8 |
| Applied-Not Received | 3 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 19/ 4.8 |
| Applied and Received | 5 | 3 | 2 | 17 | 0 | 27/ 6.8 |

[a] Units not reported

When asked to indicate the reasons for leaving college (question number 16), there were 1,446 responses made by 400 students for an average of 3.6 per student (Tables 30 and 31). Academic reasons accounted for 562 (39%) responses. Two Hundred and sixty-six (18%) were financial, and 618 (43%) were miscellaneous and personal. There were 421 (29%) responses under the category of "other" for each of these three areas. Because of the large number of responses under "other" it is suggested respondents be asked to specify the reason. For those specified reasons with a significant number of responses, a specific item would be added to the list. A follow-up on these responses may have provided more specific and pertinent items to include in future surveys. One item to consider might be, "transferred to another college."

TABLE 30

REASONS FOR LEAVING COLLEGE

| | N | % | % of 1446 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ACADEMIC REASONS** | | | |
| A. Achieved my academic goal | 18 | 4.5 | 1.3 |
| B. Transferred to another college | 31 | 7.8 | 2.1 |
| C. Needed a break from college | 49 | 12.3 | 3.4 |
| D. Courses/programs I wanted were not available | 59 | 14.8 | 4.1 |
| E. Dissatisfied with my academic performance | 50 | 12.5 | 3.5 |
| F. Dissatisfied with the quality of teaching | 41 | 10.3 | 2.8 |
| G. Dissatisfied with the learning environment | 27 | 6.7 | 1.9 |
| H. Courses not what I wanted | 41 | 10.3 | 2.8 |
| I. Unsure of my academic goals | 37 | 9.3 | 2.6 |
| J. Other | 209 | 52.3 | 14.5 |
| Total | 562 | 100.0 | 38.9 |
| **FINANCIAL REASONS** | | | |
| K. Did not have enough money to continue | 38 | 9.5 | 2.6 |
| L. Could not obtain financial aid | 10 | 2.5 | 0.7 |
| M. Got a job | 36 | 9.0 | 2.6 |
| N. Needed money and got a job | 17 | 4.2 | 1.2 |
| O. Increased my working hours while enrolled | 66 | 16.5 | 4.6 |
| P. Other | 99 | 24.8 | 6.8 |
| Total | 266 | 100.0 | 18.4 |
| **OTHER REASONS** | | | |
| Q. Achieved my personal goal | 18 | 4.5 | 1.3 |
| R. College experience not what I expected | 9 | 2.3 | 0.6 |
| S. Was not prepared for college courses | 19 | 4.7 | 1.3 |
| T. Was not interested in courses | 25 | 6.3 | 1.7 |
| U. College courses required too much time | 78 | 19.5 | 5.4 |
| V. Few people I could identify with | 10 | 2.5 | 0.7 |
| W. Did not feel the faculty really cared about me | 12 | 3.0 | 0.8 |
| X. Moved out of area | 33 | 8.2 | 2.3 |
| Y. Could not work and go to school at same time | 104 | 26.0 | 7.2 |
| Z. Other responsibilities became too great | 116 | 29.0 | 8.0 |
| AA. Personal problems | 81 | 20.2 | 5.6 |
| BB. Other | 113 | 28.3 | 8.0 |
| Total | 618 | 100.0 | 29.1 |

TABLE 31

REASONS FOR LEAVING COLLEGE BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT [a]

| | ACADEMIC | | | | | | | | | | FINANCIAL | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P |
| 1. 3 or Less Units | 5 | 7 | 20 | 29 | 20 | 22 | 14 | 24 | 14 | 92 | 11 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 28 | 17 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | 0 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 32 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 14 | 19 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 23 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 11 |
| 4. 12+ Units | 6 | 16 | 14 | 16 | 14 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 52 | 12 | 2 | 13 | 9 | 18 | 19 |

| | OTHER | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | AA | BB |
| 1. 3 or Less Units | 7 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 37 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 41 | 57 | 29 | 51 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 18 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 17 | 21 | 18 | 16 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 17 | 9 | 9 | 14 |
| 4. 12+ Units | 4 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 27 | 26 | 23 | 26 |

[a] REASONS:

ACADEMIC

A. Achieved My Academic Goal
B. Transferred to another College
C. Needed a Break from College
D. Courses/Programs I Wanted Were not Available
E. Dissatisfied with my Academic Performance
F. Dissatisfied with the Quality of Teaching
G. Dissatisfied with the Learning Environment
H. Courses not What I Wanted
I. Unsure of my Academic Goals
J. Other

FINANCIAL REASONS

K. Did not Have Enough Money to Continue
L. Could not Obtain Financial Aid
M. Got a Job
N. Needed Money and got a Job
O. Increased my Working Hours While Enrolled
P. Other

OTHER REASONS

Q. Achieved my Personal Goal
R. College Experience not What I Expected
S. Was not Prepared for College Courses
T. Was not Interested in Courses
U. College Courses Required too Much Time
V. Few People I Could Identify With
W. Did not Feel the Faculty Really Cared About Me
X. Moved Out of Area
Y. Could Not Work and Go to School at Same Time
Z. Other Responsibilities Became too Great
AA. Personal Problems
BB. Other

In a descending order of importance, the following major reasons were cited as reasons for leaving Sierra College:

1. Other responsibilities became too great (8%)
2. Inability to work and go to college (7.2%)
3. Personal problems (5.6%)
4. Courses required too much time (5.4%)
5. Working hours were increased while enrolled (4.6%)

Three to four percent of the 1,446 responses cited a need to take a break from college; desired courses or programs were not available; dissatisfaction with their academic performance (conceivably because other commitments prevented the students from achieving their academic potential); dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching; courses undertaken were not what was expected; and uncertainty of academic goals were academic reasons cited. Financial reasons given were: 1) not enough money to continue (2.6%); 2) got a job (2.6%); and 3) increased working hours while enrolled (4.6%). There were no other "miscellaneous-personal" reasons in the three to four percent range.

Major reasons for leaving college listed by those taking three or less units were: 1) unavailability of courses; 2) courses they had were not the ones they wanted; 3) other academic; 4) increase in working hours; 5) other financial; 6) courses required too much time; 7) could not work and go to

college at the same time; 8) other responsibilities became too great; 9) personal problems; and 10) other miscellaneous. They listed more miscellaneous than any other group.

Those taking 12 or more units cited four major reasons for leaving college. They were "other" academic, inability to work and go to college at the same time, other responsibilities became too great, and "other" personal or miscellaneous. "Other" academic reasons was the only significant reason cited by the group taking four to six or seven to 11 units.

At first blush, it appears the overwhelming reason for leaving college was related to some extensive activity that was in existence prior to the beginning of the term and for which there was already a significant commitment. If students are more committed (time and emotions) to these activities than a course or two, when demands for additional time and energies are being pushed to the maximum creating stress, the easiest and sometimes only alternative is to withdraw from college. College courses in this scenario are less important and become more expendable. It is much easier to sacrifice one or two courses because of lesser commitment, importance, and/or investment than a part-time job, personal obligation, family responsibilities, children, or other prior commitments.

Those students taking nine or more units may drop one course at a time, attempting to salvage something of their academic

careers and prevent "failure", or drop them all at once. It is not uncommon to see students try to salvage something of the semester but eventually drop all courses since their energies were dissipated or applied more globally to all subjects rather than just two or three. Consequently, when they are in academic difficulty the stress usually has pervasive, negative affects on all courses.

As will be seen later, most of these students plan to return and leave with a positive attitude toward the college and are satisfied with the experiences they received. Personal interviews with those withdrawing could have revealed more of the economic, psychological, and personal reasons and reactions to the attrition phenomena.

Students were asked to choose the most important, second, and third most important reason for leaving college (question 16 and Tables 32 and 33). The single most important reason for leaving college was that <u>other</u> responsibilities, not course work, became too great. Working while going to college, personal problems, and college courses requiring too much time were the leading reasons for leaving. Again, financial reasons were not of great importance for this group. Other unidentified miscellaneous-personal reasons accounted for 11 percent of the total responses. The five highest rankings of reasons for each category are listed in Table 32.

TABLE 32

RANK ORDER OF IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR LEAVING COLLEGE

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Most Important | Other responsibilities became too great | Personal problems | Could not work and go to school at same time | Desired courses/ programs not available | Quality of teaching |
| Second Most Important | Could not work and go to school at same time | Other responsibilities became too great | Personal problems | Courses required too much time | Desired courses/ programs not available |
| Third Most Important | Courses required too much time | Other responsibilities became too great | Could not work and go to school at same time | Personal problems | Needed a break from college |
| Combined Choices | Other responsibilities became too great | Could not work and go to school at same time | Personal problems | Courses required too much time | Desired courses/ programs not available |

TABLE 33

PRIORITIZATION OF REASONS IN ITEM 16
BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT [a]

| | | ACADEMIC | | | | | | | | | | FINANCIAL | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P |
| 1. 3 or Less Units | Most Important | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| | 2nd Most | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| | 3rd Most | 0 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | Most Important | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| | 2nd Most | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| | 3rd Most | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | Most Important | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| | 2nd Most | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | 3rd Most | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 4. 12+ Units | Most Important | 2 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 0 |
| | 2nd Most | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| | 3rd Most | 1 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

| | | OTHER | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | AA | BB |
| 1. 3 or Less Units | Most Important | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 13 | 22 | 9 | 27 |
| | 2nd Most | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 15 | 10 | 6 |
| | 3rd Most | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 6 | 3 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | Most Important | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| | 2nd Most | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| | 3rd Most | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | Most Important | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| | 2nd Most | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| | 3rd Most | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| 4. 12+ Units | Most Important | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 13 |
| | 2nd Most | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| | 3rd Most | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

[a] REASONS

ACADEMIC

A. Achieved My Academic Goal
B. Transferred to another College
C. Needed a Break from College
D. Courses/Programs I Wanted Were not Available
E. Dissatisfied with my Academic Performance
F. Dissatisfied with the Quality of Teaching
G. Dissatisfied with the Learning Environment
H. Courses not What I Wanted
I. Unsure of my Academic Goals
J. Other

FINANCIAL

K. Did not Have Enough Money to Continue
L. Could not Obtain Financial Aid
M. Got a Job
N. Needed Money and got a Job
O. Increased my Working Hours While Enrolled
P. Other

OTHER

Q. Achieved my Personal Goal
R. College Experience not What I Expected
S. Was not Prepared for College Courses
T. Was not Interested in Courses
U. College Courses Required too Much Time
V. Few People I Could Identify With
W. Did not Feel the Faculty Really Cared About Me
X. Moved Out of Area
Y. Could Not Work and Go to School at Same Time
Z. Other Responsibilities Became too Great
AA. Personal Problems
BB. Other

The sum of responses for the first, second, and third choices for all reasons were totalled to derive a combined tally of responses and are displayed as a fourth category. Table 33 depicts the importance of reasons for leaving college by units of enrollment.

The respondents were asked to indicate their knowledge, use, and satisfaction of 21 services provided by the college (question 18 and Tables 34 and 35). An assessment index was created by dividing the number of responses for each assessment category (did not know, knew about but not used, etc.) of each service by the total number of responses for each service. The total of all indices add up to 1.0. As seen in these tables, the majority (.50) of students knew about the 21 services but did not use them, followed by those who used the services and were satisfied with them (.29). Some of the services were unknown only to a small number (.16) of the students. A much smaller number of students (.06) used some of the services and were dissatisfied.

Considering that most of the students were attending on a part-time basis, it is encouraging to know that such a large number (.85) of the students knew of the various services. On the other hand, it is baffling to understand how students who had applied for admission and enrolled in classes would not know about admissions or registration. More perplexing is the fact that some enrolled students knew about these services but did not use them!

TABLE 34

KNOWLEDGE AND EVALUATION OF COLLEGE SERVICES [a]

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Did Not Know | 12 | 12 | 45 | 43 | 72 | 70 | 149 | 41 | 36 | 67 | 75 | 90 |
| Knew/Not Used | 31 | 56 | 166 | 160 | 206 | 251 | 170 | 249 | 256 | 242 | 212 | 222 |
| Used/ Satisfied | 277 | 236 | 103 | 110 | 58 | 17 | 21 | 46 | 34 | 28 | 42 | 20 |
| Used/Not Satisfied | 34 | 50 | 32 | 39 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 15 | 7 | 10 | 8 |
| Total | 354 | 354 | 346 | 352 | 344 | 344 | 341 | 344 | 341 | 344 | 339 | 340 |

| | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | Total | Asmnt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Did Not Know | 77 | 25 | 57 | 21 | 142 | 12 | 9 | 39 | 15 | 1,109 | .16 |
| Knew/Not Used | 247 | 120 | 236 | 115 | 190 | 60 | 50 | 167 | 27 | 3,433 | .50 |
| Used/ Satisfied | 7 | 171 | 37 | 198 | 4 | 247 | 221 | 110 | 2 | 1,989 | .29 |
| Used/Not Satisfied | 4 | 28 | 7 | 11 | 0 | 29 | 70 | 18 | 6 | 391 | .06 |
| Total | 335 | 344 | 337 | 345 | 336 | 348 | 350 | 334 | 50 | 6,922 | |

[a] Services:

A. Admissions
B. Registration/Orientation
C. Academic Advising
D. Guidance, Counseling, Testing
E. Reading, Writing, Math, and Study Skills Improvement
F. Tutoring
G. College Cultural Programs
H. Recreation and Athletic Programs
I. Financial Aid
J. Student Employment Services
K. Career Planning
L. Job Placement
M. Housing Services or Promotion
N. Cafeteria
O. Health Services
P. Library
Q. Child Care
R. Bookstore
S. Parking
T. Campus Security
U. Other

TABLE 35

KNOWLEDGE AND EVALUATION OF COLLEGE SERVICES
BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT [a]

| | | SERVICES | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
| 1. 3 or Less Units $S_s$=173 | Did Not Know | 6 | 7 | 24 | 25 | 33 | 40 | 65 | 22 | 20 | 31 | 35 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 15 | 21 | 81 | 74 | 85 | 94 | 66 | 105 | 106 | 98 | 94 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 113 | 97 | 30 | 36 | 19 | 8 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 11 | 10 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 13 | 19 | 7 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units $S_s$=68 | Did Not Know | 4 | 1 | 12 | 10 | 16 | 16 | 31 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 17 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 5 | 11 | 25 | 28 | 35 | 40 | 26 | 43 | 44 | 46 | 32 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 44 | 40 | 16 | 20 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 9 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units $S_s$=43 | Did Not Know | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 15 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 5 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 5 | 7 | 15 | 14 | 20 | 30 | 18 | 26 | 30 | 22 | 21 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 29 | 26 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 1 | 2 | 7 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. 12+ Units $S_s$=105 | Did Not Know | 1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 13 | 9 | 34 | 8 | 3 | 11 | 17 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 5 | 15 | 39 | 37 | 57 | 79 | 54 | 68 | 68 | 69 | 57 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 82 | 66 | 42 | 41 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 15 | 11 | 15 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 9 | 17 | 10 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 2 |

| | | SERVICES | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | TOTAL |
| 1. 3 or Less Units $S_s$=173 | Did Not Know | 40 | 35 | 20 | 30 | 18 | 59 | 10 | 8 | 25 | 9 | 562 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 93 | 101 | 64 | 93 | 60 | 78 | 32 | 25 | 70 | 13 | 1468 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 6 | 2 | 52 | 14 | 59 | 1 | 93 | 88 | 42 | 2 | 717 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 3 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 20 | 3 | 4 | 119 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units $S_s$=68 | Did Not Know | 18 | 16 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 220 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 35 | 41 | 17 | 42 | 17 | 29 | 9 | 7 | 22 | 2 | 556 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 4 | 1 | 35 | 4 | 39 | 0 | 44 | 35 | 21 | 0 | 345 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 2 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 20 | 5 | 1 | 84 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units $S_s$=43 | Did Not Know | 11 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 98 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 23 | 27 | 14 | 28 | 17 | 20 | 5 | 3 | 13 | 2 | 360 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 1 | 1 | 22 | 2 | 20 | 1 | 31 | 28 | 17 | 0 | 231 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 43 |
| 4. 12+ Units $S_s$=105 | Did Not Know | 19 | 16 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 33 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 190 |
| | Knew/Not Used | 62 | 70 | 21 | 67 | 18 | 57 | 12 | 14 | 53 | 8 | 930 |
| | Used/Satisfied | 9 | 3 | 56 | 13 | 72 | 2 | 70 | 62 | 29 | 0 | 631 |
| | Used/Not Satisfied | 2 | 3 | 14 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 12 | 21 | 8 | 0 | 139 |

[a] SERVICES

A. Admissions
B. Registration/Orientation
C. Academic Advising
D. Guidance, Counseling, and Testing
E. Reading, Writing, Math, and Study Skills Improvement
F. Tutoring
G. College Cultural Programs
H. Recreation and Athletic Programs
I. Financial Aid
J. Student Employment Services
K. Career Planning
L. Job Placement
M. Housing Services
N. Cafeteria
O. Health Services
P. Library
Q. Child Care
R. Bookstore
S. Parking
T. Campus Security
U. Other

NOTE: Total Number of Students Crossfoots to 389

For the purpose of this report, an individual service not known to 50 or more of the 400 respondents was considered to have a recognition problem. Heading this list were college cultural programs (.44) and child care (.42). Other services with recognition problems were: 1) job placement (.27); 2) housing services (.23); 3) career planning (.22); 4) learning skills for reading, writing, math and study habits (.21); 5) tutoring services (.20); 6) employment services (.20); and 7) health services (.17). Again, since the majority of these students are part-time, possibly attending in the evening, and already largely committed to other "non college" activities, their need to know about these services may have been slight. Not having gone through an orientation program probably compounds their lack of information about such services. Other services not as well known as they might be were reading, writing, math, and study skills improvement (.21), tutoring (.20), student employment services (.20), career planning (.22), job placement (.27) and housing (.23).

The admissions-registration process was used with satisfaction by .78 and .67 percent respectively. Only 14 percent were dissatisfied with registration and 10 percent with admissions. It is suspected that most of the dissatisfaction with registration was due to the inability to get desired courses on a particular day or time, and, from a preferred instructor. It has also been found that many students dislike having to fill

out a complete application form and register for one class being taken for a recreational or avocational purpose.

Table 35 clearly shows a larger proportion of those taking more units knew about the services and used them to their satisfaction. It must also be pointed out that those carrying 12 or more units were dissatisfied with the services in greater proportion to the total number in that group than the three groups carrying fewer units.

Academic advising and guidance, counseling and testing was known to, but not used by .48 and .46 of the students respectively. In the 1981 study, it was found that counseling had a direct relationship with higher grade point averages, increased number of units taken, and improved retention rates. Services used and found to be less than satisfactory were: guidance, counseling, and testing (.11); parking (.20); and "other" (.12).

It is a well researched fact that the closer a campus is to a student's residence, the more apt he or she is to enroll there. If the commute time were too great, could it be a barrier to attending classes or a factor in dropping out? The length of commute time was surveyed (Tables 36 and 37) and it was found that 63 percent of the students commuted 15 or more minutes to campus with 18 percent traveling for 30 minutes or more.

TABLE 36

LENGTH OF TIME TO COMMUTE TO CAMPUS

| | Less than 15 Minutes | 15-30 Minutes | 30-60 Minutes | 60+ Minutes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number | 149 | 176 | 61 | 7 |
| Percent | 38 | 45 | 16 | 2 |

TABLE 37

COMMUTE TIME BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| Time | Units | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ |
| Less than 15 minutes | 71 | 23 | 11 | 36 |
| 15-30 minutes | 65 | 35 | 21 | 46 |
| 30-60 minutes | 26 | 7 | 10 | 18 |
| 60+ minutes | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 |

Economical factors are frequently cited as major factors in student attrition. Deeper or more intensive follow-up interviews of dropouts have not been able to verify this widely held belief. It has been found that financial problems will keep a student from applying and enrolling but does not account for as much attrition as is often believed. Financial problems are cited as more socially acceptable reasons in lieu of deeper personal and academic problems.

This survey attempted to ascertain if and what financial factors may contribute to dropping out of college. As seen earlier, prior commitments to a job were factors. Only 35, or nine percent of the respondents were dependent upon parental financial support. The rest (346) may have been self supporting, dependent upon a spouse, or sharing financial support responsibilities. The narrow reference to "parents" needs to be modified to increase the value of any financial support question. As has been found, the majority of these students were over 25 years of age and may no longer be dependent upon the parents for financial support. It appears a large number of the students were the primary source of financial support or shared that responsibility with a spouse.

The reference to "parental" income, (Tables 38, 39, and 40) probably accounted for most of the lessened response rate for the same reasons as cited above. Others may not have known nor chose to disclose the incomes. Only 207 of the 400 indicated parental income. Realizing the limitations of sampling in this study, it remains noteworthy that 57 percent of those who dropped out reported incomes of $30,000 a year or more with the highest frequency being the $30,000 to $35,000 range. A mean income of $33,350 was found by using the midpoint of each frequency and the number of respondents for each.

TABLE 38

PARENTAL INCOME IN 100'S OF DOLLARS

| | 0-44.9 | 45-99.9 | 100-149.9 | 150-199.9 | 200-249.9 | 290-299.9 | 300-349.9 | 350-399.9 | 400-499.9 | 500-749.9 | 750-More |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. | 11 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 22 | 25 | 30 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 17 |
| % | 5 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 8 |

TABLE 39

PARENTAL INCOME BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| Income | Units | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ |
| 0- $4,499 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| $4,500- $9,999 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| $10,000-$14,999 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| $15,000-$19,999 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| $20,000-$24,999 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| $25,000-$29,999 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| $30,000-$34,999 | 14 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| $35,000-$39,999 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| $40,000-$49,999 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 9 |
| $50,000-$74,999 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| $75,000 or more | 7 | 3 | 2 | 3 |

TABLE 40

FINANCIAL DEPENDENCE ON PARENTS BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| | Units | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or Less | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12+ |
| Financially dependent upon parents | 6 | 3 | 7 | 18 |
| Financially independent | 152 | 61 | 35 | 84 |

Question number 23, asking how much "tuition" these students were willing to pay was included to get some idea of student opinion. The item was poorly constructed and produced little information of value. There was a wide range of figures with a lot of zero's. If any generalization were made, it would be that the majority of these students indicated an unwillingness to pay tuition with others willing to pay varying amounts from $5 to $1,000.

Attitudes and values about education and the college are important in assessing behavior related to attrition. A series of questions (numbers 24 through 27) were devised to measure selected attitudes and are represented in Tables 41 and 42. The students considered it very important to receive a college education with a mean of 4.08 on a scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). Those taking 12 or more units considered this to be more important than those taking six or

TABLE 41

STUDENT ATTITUDES AND VALUES ABOUT EDUCATION AND SIERRA COLLEGE

| | Importance of a College Education | | | | | Satisfaction with Sierra College | | | | | Importance to Your Parents | | | | | Recommend Sierra College | | Consider Returning | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Y | N | Y | N [a] |
| Number | 10 | 17 | 78 | 91 | 173 | 9 | 16 | 126 | 152 | 79 | 21 | 12 | 66 | 54 | 92 | 374 | 11 | 362 | 27 |
| Percent | 3 | 5 | 21 | 25 | 47 | 2 | 4 | 33 | 40 | 21 | 21 | 4 | 23 | 19 | 33 | 97 | 3 | 93 | 7 |

[a] 1 Not important or satisfied
2
3 Moderately important or satisfied
4
5 Extremely important or satisfied
Y Yes
N No

TABLE 42

STUDENT ATTITUDES AND VALUES ABOUT EDUCATION
AND SIERRA COLLEGE BY UNITS OF ENROLLMENT

| | The Importance of a College Education | | | | | Satisfaction With Sierra College | | | | | Importance of a College Education to Parents | | | | | Would you Recommend Sierra College To Friend | | Consider Returning to Sierra College | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 1. 3 or Less Units | 7 | 7 | 36 | 44 | 58 | 4 | 7 | 55 | 69 | 26 | 23 | 3 | 26 | 21 | 34 | 156 | 5 | 155 | 9 |
| 2. 4 to 6 Units | 1 | 5 | 17 | 14 | 26 | 1 | 2 | 24 | 24 | 12 | 13 | 2 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 62 | 3 | 63 | 3 |
| 3. 7 to 11 Units | 0 | 0 | 11 | 8 | 23 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 18 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 39 | 0 | 38 | 3 |
| 4. 12+ Units | 0 | 4 | 12 | 22 | 62 | 3 | 6 | 30 | 34 | 29 | 14 | 6 | 17 | 16 | 33 | 101 | 2 | 90 | 11 |
| Totals | 8 | 16 | 76 | 88 | 169 | 9 | 15 | 121 | 145 | 77 | 56 | 12 | 65 | 52 | 91 | 358 | 10 | 346 | 26 |

[a] 1 Not important or satisfied
2
3 Moderately important or satisfied
4
5 Extremely important or satisfied
Y Yes
N No

less units. They also showed satisfaction with their experience with Sierra College with a mean of 3.72 with those taking seven or more units indicating greater satisfaction than those taking six or fewer units. When asked to rate the importance to their parents that they receive a college education, they felt it was moderately important with a mean of 3.24. As seen in the two previous questions, those taking seven or more units considered this slightly more important than those taking six or fewer units. The latter item may not have been applicable to older students because of the parental reference. The crosstab presentations clearly show that those taking more units also consider these items to be more important with the highest rankings of importance registered by those taking 12 or more units. Is it because these students considered these values to be important that they are full-time students or vice-versa?

The students left with a positive attitude about Sierra College as represented by their overwhelming willingness to recommend Sierra College to friends (97%) and consideration of returning to the campus (93%). No differentiation was found according to a crosstabs plotting of units of enrollment.

The results of this study of dropout students covers demographics, goals, transfer intentions, reasons for leaving college, assessment of college services, financial and commuting information, and attitudes. Twenty-seven questions were included in the questionnaire and have been presented above as totals and

crosstabulations by units of enrollment for those questions. The results of each question demands greater analysis than can be provided within the text of this report. The individual and collective results have implications for all facets of the college and should be pursued by those who provide services to our students. In the next section, a brief overview of the results will be presented, a conclusion of the findings will be made, and possible implications of the conclusion. It will not exhaust the need to devote broader and more intensive attention to the results.

## IV. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Attrition is a major concern of college educators and policy makers. Approximately 50 percent of all entering freshmen drop out after the first year. Even though there has been considerable research on attrition, the generalization of these findings does not give specific information for any one campus. Sierra College has a need to know more about the characteristics, attitudes, knowledge and rating of services, reasons for leaving college, and other factors related to the phenomena of attrition.

It is theorized that the greater the amount of involvement in college, the more apt a student is to have made a significant and meaningful commitment to a set of integrated goals. This study attempted to illustrate this by developing crosstabulation tables based on units carried at the time of first census, or Monday of the fourth week of an eighteen week semester.

Even though a 1981 study used first-time day students as its population and this study looked at all of those who had completely withdrawn (dropped all classes), the profile characteristics of the dropouts in both populations remained the same. The "typical" dropout student is apt to be a Caucasian or Hispanic, middle aged female, married, taking one class for three or fewer units for avocational or recreational purposes, and has no intention of transferring. Most of them had declared a two-

year major and indicated they would take one or more semesters to complete their goal.

First-time students withdrew at a lesser rate than those who were continuing. Freshmen and sophomore undergraduates had lower attrition rates than those with 60 or more units or a degree. Returning students, many with degrees, were more inclined to drop out than any other group. Students from 18 to 20 years of age had lower attrition rates with much higher dropout rates observed between the ages of 25 and 44.

The largest number of students (548 or 39.9%) withdrew in the first two and a half weeks of the semester with 265 (18%) of them withdrawing on the first day of the term. It is speculated these are primarily students who may have gotten jobs or transferred. Though some attrition is to be expected, the first weeks of the semester seem to be most critical and call for a mobilization of institutional resources to increase retention. "Getting a good start" in college is conducive to increased retention. Sierra College must ask itself if it is doing all it possibly can to provide the very best start for each student. Elements of proposed matriculation programs look very promising in this regard. Attitudes and efforts of staff can convey to the students a true concern for their welfare and success.

While most of those who withdrew declared a two-year major (1,042), over half (571) declared general studies as their area

of concentration. Experience shows this classification is most often reflective of no major or an uncertain educational focus.

Forty-six percent of the students had attended college before. The largest group had last attended another Community College other than Sierra College (296 or 20.3%). Ninety-seven (33%) last attended American River College. One hundred and twenty-six (8.6%) last attended a California State University campus led by California State University, Sacramento.

The transfer intentions of these students follows the same pattern of college of last attendance with 1,235 or 85 percent declaring no transfer intention. The transfer institutions in order of preference were California State University, Sacramento (69), American River College (29), and California State University, Chico (16). A total of 87 students or six percent of the total declared another Community College as their intended transfer institution.

The major emphasis of this study was to partially describe who the dropout students were and what they valued. It also included, but was not limited to how much they worked, their knowledge and evaluation of college services, reasons for leaving and other factors contained in the questionnaire. Crosstabulations by units were included to see if there were obvious differences in the above, according to units taken.

Most of the 400 respondents were women (69%), married (52%), Caucasian (93%), and took three or fewer units (44%), followed by those taking 12 or more units (27%). Sixty-nine percent of the 400 were 26 years of age or older. The largest number of full-time students were found in the 18 to 22 year old bracket while the largest age group for those taking three or less units was from 31 to 40 years.

The students had attended Sierra College for an average of 2.4 semesters before withdrawing with one-third attending for less than one semester. A ratio between those academic, career, and personal goals that were considered important and met was established. This "coefficient of success" showed that a coefficient of 0.65, 1.0 being perfect, was reached for all 21 goals. Though most of the students attended only a short time, most had successfully met their goal(s).

Goals with the highest number of responses were: 1) improving knowledge, technical skills, and/or competencies for a job or career; 2) upgrade job skills; 3) recreational/ personal enrichment; 4) discovering career/occupation interests; and 5) preparation for a new career.

Career preparation represented the largest and most important group of goals followed by social/cultural/personal goals, and then academic goals. Those taking 12 or more units reported greater success in meeting these goals than any other

group. They also listed transfer to a four-year college as their highest goal. This suggests that when transfer studies are made, the "target pool" or base for such studies should focus on full-time students rather than the total day/evening and part-time/full-time enrollment.

Sierra College was the first choice of 347 (91%) of the respondents followed by another Community College. Forty-six percent had a high school diploma or equivalent prior to their enrollment, 30 percent had some prior college experience but no degree and 21 percent had an Associate or higher degree (16% had a Bachelor's Degree or higher). Those carrying 12 or more units fell largely into the groups with those who have a high school diploma or had previous college experience but no degree. Most of those with an Associate or higher degree were taking three or less units. When the units/hours of the respondents are converted to ADA, then multiplied by $2,500 an ADA, approximately $172,500 in revenue is lost by the 400 respondents alone.

The majority of students reported a 3.0 or better grade point average or greater, or they did not know of their grade point average. Those taking three or less units and those carrying 12 or more units had the greatest number of students reporting that they did not know their grade point average or they did not have one.

Two-thirds of the students worked 20 or more hours a week with one-half of them working full-time. Sixty-nine percent of those working full-time were taking six or less units. Only 19 students indicated they sought financial aid but did not receive it. The majority of those indicating a need for financial assistance were taking seven or more units. The most frequently cited reasons for leaving college, personal reasons, were given most often followed by academic and then financial reasons. A large number of undifferentiated reasons listed as "other" were reported for each of the three areas. The students averaged 3.6 reasons for leaving college and not just one. This seems to indicate the attrition process is more integrated and complex than thought and cannot be explained by looking at single isolated factors. Reasons for leaving also represented extensive and continuing commitments in existence before enrollment. As suspected, "other responsibilities," including work and increased working hours, resulting in less time to perform course work, were selected as major reasons for leaving. Personal problems which could have been related to the above were high on the list of major reasons. A wider range of reasons were selected by those taking three or less units with only four major reasons selected by those taking 12 or more units.

When asked to indicate their knowledge, use, and satisfaction of 21 services, 50 percent knew of the services but did not use them. Twenty-nine percent used and were satisfied with the services, while 16 percent of the services were unknown

and only six percent were dissatisfied with their use. A total of 85 percent knew of the various services. It was shown that a large proportion of those taking more units knew and used the services to their satisfaction. Those taking 12 or more units registered greater dissatisfaction than those carrying fewer units. This seems to suggest that while they knew of the services and used them more often, greater exposure led to greater dissatisfaction.

Most of the students commuted from 15 to 30 minutes to campus followed by those who spent less than 15 minutes in transit. Most of those taking three or less units traveled 15 minutes or less while most of those taking 12 or more units traveled 15 to 30 minutes. It is conjectured that those taking fewer units, may find a longer commute to be antithetical to a more "casual" attitude or reason for taking a course.

Students were surveyed to determine if parental support or lack of income appeared to be related to attrition. Few respondents indicated dependency upon parental support, probably because the middle aged students are no longer dependent on such financial support. From the reported annual incomes, a mean income of $33,350 was computed. Due to the limited response rates for these items, the results must be used with caution. Attempts to ascertain if "tuition fees" were a reason for the student's attrition were unsuccessful due to poor wording of the question and the paucity and divergence of responses.

As suggested above, attitudes and values about college have been found to have significant influences on retention. The dropout respondents displayed all of the positive perceptions normally assigned to high retention rates. Perhaps students maintain positive attitudes about their college choices and experiences whether they remain in college or drop out. As seen earlier, prolonged enrollment may in fact increase dissatisfaction commensurate with increased exposure to the educational environment and processes. Over 90 percent indicated they would consider returning to Sierra College as the opportunity allowed or the need arose.

These students considered receiving a college education as being very important, especially those taking 12 or more units. They also expressed a satisfaction with their college experiences, though a lower rating than that for importance, and those taking seven or more units had slightly higher ratings than those with three or less units. This contradiction to the aforementioned hypothesis that increased exposure may lead to greater dissatisfaction needs additional research to determine why the contradiction occurs. It is suspected that those who take 12 or more units over a longer period of time do show greater dissatisfaction in services as seen earlier. However, their overall positive experience in successfully meeting their goals emerged in their latter assessment.

These students also felt their parents considered college education to be moderately important with those taking 12 or more units registering higher ratings. An overwhelming majority (97%) expressed a willingness to recommend Sierra College to others and 93 percent would consider returning to the campus in the future. These latter findings were universal, irrespective of units taken.

In summary, studies and criticism of the community college attrition may not accurately report the true circumstances surrounding the problem. A closer analysis shows that those most prone to withdraw may not fit the general concept of a young, full-time student intending to transfer to a four-year college or achieve an Associate's Degree. It can be boldly stated that a large number of students are best described as "casual" since they are middle aged, taking only one course and that is for an avocational or recreational reason and should not be the basis of "hysteria" about dropout statistics. In fact, there are some positive findings. Though half of the students may not complete one year, there is evidence to show a significantly large number of those students met their goal and would re-enroll at a future date to undertake a new goal. When doing community college attrition studies, it is necessary to eliminate from the data base those who are "casual students" or did not intend to persevere in a long term program to meet the needs of a certificate, Associate Degree, or transfer. Many students were interested in only one class for an avocational or recreational

reason similar to those who enroll in community service classes and had intended to enroll for only one semester. Many returned for additional terms and courses. When these latter students fail to re-enroll, we should not classify them as dropouts but rather as a "goal completer." It is suggested we be cautious about labeling such students in the credit courses and programs as dropouts and temper the dropout hysteria accordingly.

More research is needed on the full-time, day, long term goal-oriented student to fairly assess meaningful attrition problems for efficient utilization of resources in developing action plans to increase retention. It is obvious the composition, values, and goals of day and evening populations are quite different. If community colleges are to be compared to four-year institutions for comparative retention studies, similar data bases or student pools must be used. It is suggested full-time day students with comparable SAT or ACT scores be used. If this approach were taken, would the differences be as dramatic as presently seen? It is suspect the community colleges would still have a slightly higher attrition rate. Though not quantified, it is felt the community colleges "promote" an attitude of expectation that being a casual student in reaching long term goals is more acceptable. This is usually the rationalization for the need to work which often has difficulty being substantiated. Perhaps the community colleges underestimate the ability and willingness of its students to meet more rigorous standards including full-time course loads. Could this be due

partly to an uncertainty on the part of college staff as to what standards students can and will pursue and an inability of the student to get the courses desired?

Additional research on the younger (18-22 year old), full-time students should also include a more intensive study on transfer intentions, majors, transfer institutions and a follow-up on these students to determine how many, from a realistic pool of transfer-oriented students, persist and eventually transfer. Older students appear to "drop in" and "stop out" of college depending on dictates of other factors in their lives. In performing the research, those who were full-time at the beginning of the term, not merely at first census, must be included and studied to determine how many there really are, how many units they were enrolled in, and why they left college in the first three weeks after two or more semesters of attendance.

This study did not propose to pose nor answer all the questions about attrition. In its present state, it can more effectively serve as an atlas of information for those responsible for intervention programs for those who dropped out of Sierra College. The college still needs to study what happened to those who applied and never enrolled and what do those who fail to enroll or drop out do when not at Sierra College. The college must ascertain if it could have been of greater assistance and what that assistance could be. It is incumbent upon others to use the information available for the

betterment of the college, students and programs in promoting excellence as defined by Alexander Astin in Achieving Educational Excellence[1]. What could the college have done to retain these students? Further discussion and analysis of these findings is necessary to not only validate the findings but to add to the body of information through additional dialogue, information, insight, and recommendations for future research. It appears this is the challenge of any study of this nature.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

## SIERRA COLLEGE
## FOLLOW-UP SURVEY
## FALL 1984

Sierra College
5000 ROCKLIN ROAD / ROCKLIN, CALIFORNIA 95677 / TELEPHONE (916) 624-3333

January 10, 1985

Dear Former Student:

Our records indicate you enrolled at Sierra College in the Fall of 1984, and then withdrew. The college is interested in the reasons for your leaving in order to determine how we may better meet the needs of our students. The information will be used for institutional planning.

We ask that you take a few minutes and complete the enclosed confidential survey. Please complete the questionnaire right away and return it in the enclosed envelope. Personal data about yourself is necessary for statistical purposes and will be included in the report.

It is important that you complete and return this survey if the report is to be useful in future decision making. Won't you take a few minutes right now and complete it?

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance. Your help in our attempt to improve the education for Sierra College students is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gerald C. Angove, President
and District Superintendent

GCA/bw
Attachments

SIERRA COLLEGE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

The information you provide will be crucial to the results of this study.

Please circle the letter of the most appropriate response, such as in the example below.

EXAMPLE:

4. Are you currently married?

A. Yes
(B) No

If you are not currently married, you should circle the letter "B" on the questionnaire as indicated above.

---

If you have questions, contact the Office of Institutional Research, Sierra College at (916) 624-3333 ext. 2340.

1. What is your sex?

A. Male
B. Female

2. How would you describe yourself?

A. White Caucasian
B. Hispanic/Spanish Surname
C. Asian/Pacific Islander
D. Black/Negro
E. Filipino
F. Other

3. How old are you?

A. Under 18 years
B. 18 to 22 years
C. 23 to 25 years
D. 26 to 30 years
E. 31 to 40 years
F. 41 to 50 years
G. 51 to 60 years
H. 61 years or more

4. Are you currently married?

A. Yes
B. No

5. How long did you attend Sierra College?

A. Less than one semester
B. One semester
C. One year
D. Two years
E. Three years
F. More than three years

6. The following statements reflect the goals of many college students. In the first column (A-U), circle those goals that were important to you when you attended Sierra College. In the second column (AA-UU), circle those goals you feel you are achieving or have achieved as a result of your experiences at Sierra College.

| These goals were important to me | These goals I am achieving or have achieved | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ACADEMIC GOALS |
| A. | AA. | To transfer to a four-year college with an AA/AS degree |
| B. | BB. | To transfer to a four-year college without an AA/AS degree |
| C. | CC. | To earn an AA/AS vocational degree |
| D. | DD. | To earn an AA/AS general education degree |
| E. | EE. | To transfer to another community college |
| F. | FF. | To earn a certificate |
| G. | GG. | To upgrade job skills |
| H. | HH. | To take courses for recreational/personal enrichment |
| I. | II. | To make up courses for grade points for transfer |
| | | CAREER-PREPARATION GOALS |
| J. | JJ. | To discover career/occupation interests |
| K. | KK. | To prepare for a new career |
| L. | LL. | To improve my knowledge, techical skills, and/or competencies in my job or career |
| M. | MM. | To increase my chances for a raise and/or promotion |
| N. | NN. | To develop skills and/or knowledge to get a job |
| O. | OO. | Other _____ |

SOCIAL-, CULTURAL-, PERSONAL-DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT GOALS

P. PP. To be involved in student life and college activities
Q. QQ. To participate in cultural and/or social events
R. RR. To meet people
S. SS. To increase my self-confidence
T. TT. To develop my ability to be independent and self-reliant
U. UU. Other _____

7. What was your former education prior to enrolling in Sierra College?

A. Not a high school graduate
B. High school proficiency exam; GED, or certificate of high school completion
C. High school diploma
D. Attended another college and no degree
E. Completed AA/AS degree but no other degree
F. Completed BA/BS degree
G. Completed degree higher than a BA/BS

8. Do you intend to transfer to another college?

A. Yes
B. No

If yes, will it be:

A. Another community college
B. State college campus
C. University of California campus
D. Private college
E. In California
F. Name of College

9. From the goals in Item 6, list the three that were the most important to you when you attended Sierra College. For example, if your most important goal was "to transfer to a four year college with an AA/AS degree," enter 6A in the first box.

A. Most Important ☐ B. Second Most Important ☐ C. Third Most Important ☐

10. Please write-in your major or area of study while you attended Sierra College.

11. Was Sierra College your first choice?

A. Yes
B. No

If no, what kind of college was your first choice?

A. A public two-year college
B. A public four-year state college
C. A public four-year university
D. A private college or university
E. A vocational/technical school
F. Other

What was the name of the college of your first choice?

12. When you left Sierra College, what was your overall grade point average (GPA)?

A. Unknown or did not have one
B. 1.00 or less
C. 1.01 to 2.00
D. 2.01 to 3.00
E. 3.01 to 4.00

13. When you attended Sierra College, how many units did you have at the beginning of the term?

A. 3 or less units
B. 4 to 6 units
C. 7 to 11 units
D. 12 or more units

When you withdrew?

A. 3 or less units
B. 4 to 6 units
C. 7 to 11 units
D. 12 or more units

14. While you were enrolled, how many hours did you normally work each week?

A. I was not employed
B. Employed 1-10 hours a week
C. Employed 11-20 hours a week
D. Employed 21-35 hours per week
E. Employed 36 or more hours a week

15. Did you apply for financial assistance while at Sierra College?

A. No
B. Yes, but did not receive it
C. Yes, and I received it

16. The decision to leave college can be motivated by a variety of reasons. Please circle <u>all</u> of the reasons listed below that contributed to your decision to leave Sierra College.

<u>ACADEMIC REASONS</u>

A. Achieved my academic goal
B. Transferred to another college
C. Needed a break from college
D. Courses/programs I wanted were not available
E. Dissatisfied with my academic performance
F. Dissatisfied with the quality of teaching
G. Dissatisfied with the learning environment
H. Courses not what I wanted
I. Unsure of my academic goals
J. Other

<u>FINANCIAL REASONS</u>

K. Did not have enough money to continue
L. Could not obtain financial aid
M. Got a job
N. Needed money and got a job
O. Increased my working hours while enrolled
P. Other

<u>OTHER REASONS</u>

Q. Achieved my personal goal
R. College experience not what I expected
S. Was not prepared for college courses
T. Was not interested in courses
U. College courses required too much time

V. Few people I could identify with
W. Did not feel the faculty really cared about me
X. Moved out of area
Y. Could not work and go to school at same time
Z. Other responsibilities became too great
AA. Personal problems
BB. Other _____

17. From the the list of reasons in Item 16, please select the three most important reasons and enter their numbers below. For example, if the most important reason was that you "got a job," enter "16M" in the first box.

A. Most Important ☐ B. Second Most Important ☐ C. Third Most Important ☐

18. The following are services provided by colleges. How would you evaluate these services as provided by our college? For each service, circle the letter and number of the response that would be most appropriate.

I did not know about this service
I knew about this service but did not use it
I used this service and was satisfied with it
I used this service but was not satisfied with it

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1. | A2. | A3. | A4. | Admissions |
| B1. | B2. | B3. | B4. | Registration/Orientation |
| C1. | C2. | C3. | C4. | Academic Advising |
| D1. | D2. | D3. | D4. | Guidance , Counseling, and Testing |
| E1. | E2. | E3. | E4. | Reading, Writing, Math, and Study Skills Improvement |
| F1. | F2. | F3. | F4. | Tutoring |
| G1. | G2. | G3. | G4. | College Cultural Programs |
| H1. | H2. | H3. | H4. | Recreation and Athletic Programs |
| I1. | I2. | I3. | I4. | Financial Aid |
| J1. | J2. | J3. | J4. | Student Employment Services |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| K1. | K2. | K3. | K4. | Career Planning |
| L1. | L2. | L3. | L4. | Job Placement |
| M1. | M2. | M3. | M4. | Housing Services |
| N1. | N2. | N3. | N4. | Cafeteria |
| O1. | O2. | O3. | O4. | Health Services |
| P1. | P2. | P3. | P4. | Library |
| Q1. | Q2. | Q3. | Q4. | Child Care |
| R1. | R2. | R3. | R4. | Bookstore |
| S1. | S2. | S3. | S4. | Parking |
| T1. | T2. | T3. | T4. | Campus Security |
| U1. | U2. | U3. | U4. | Other |

19. In what city and state was your permanent residence while attending Sierra College?

_____

20. How long did it take you to commute to campus?

A. Less than 15 minutes
B. 15 - 30 minutes
C. 30 - 60 minutes
D. More than 60 minutes

21. Which of the following best describes your parents' total income for last year.

A. 0 - 4,499
B. 4,500 - 9,999
C. 10,000 - 14,999
D. 15,000 - 19,999
E. 20,000 - 24,999
F. 25,000 - 29,999
G. 30,000 - 34,999
H. 35,000 - 39,999
I. 40,000 - 49,999
J. 50,000 - 74,999
K. 75,000 - or more

22. Are you dependent upon your parents for financial support?

A. Yes
B. No

If yes, amount of parental support

_____

23. What is the highest amount of "tuition" you would be willing to pay for:

A. Five or less units
B. Six or more units

24. On a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important), rate the importance to you of receiving a college education.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Important | | Moderately Important | | Extremely Important |

25. On a scale of 1 to 5 . . . . rate your satisfaction with Sierra College.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Satisfied | | Moderately Satisfied | | Extremely Satisfied |

On a scale of 1 to 5 . . . . importance to your parents that you receive a college education.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Important | | Moderately Important | | Extremely Important |

26. Would you recommend Sierra College to your friends?

A. Yes
B. No

27. Would you consider returning to Sierra College?

A. Yes
B. No

If yes, you may call the Sierra College Admissions Office [(916) 624-3333 ext. 2316] Monday through Thursday from 7:30 am to 9:00 pm and Friday from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm for registration information and assistance. Spring, 1985, classes begin January 28, 1985.

28. Please provide any other information about yourself, the college, staff, or services that have not been covered by this survey and that would improve the college for other students. Your candidness is appreciated.

We thank you for responding to this survey.

DAB:mk
1/85

APPENDIX B.1

TABLE B.1

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH
AND WITHOUT READING SCORES,
AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING
SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND
THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT
READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING
SEMESTER OF 1982, ON UNITS AND COURSES
ATTEMPTED AND COMPLETED

TABLE B.1

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES, AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER OF 1982, ON UNITS AND COURSES ATTEMPTED AND COMPLETED

| Variable | Term | Group and Number | Range | Mean | Variance | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | With and Without Reading = 1,760 | .00 - 22.00 | 9.82 | 24.34 | 4.93 |
| Units | 1981 | With Reading = 1,107 | .00 - 22.00 | 11.68 | 16.94 | 4.12 |
| Attempted | Spring | | | | | |
| | 1982 | With and Without Reading = 1,111 | .50 - 26.00 | 11.62 | 22.27 | 4.72 |
| | Fall | With and Without Reading = 1,760 | .00 - 19.00 | 6.44 | 30.39 | 5.51 |
| Units | 1981 | With Reading = 1,107 | .00 - 19.00 | 8.12 | 30.31 | 5.51 |
| Completed | Spring | | | | | |
| | 1982 | With and Without Reading = 1,111 | .00 - 20.00 | 7.95 | 31.92 | 5.65 |
| | Fall | With and Without Reading = 1,760 | 1.00 - 12.00 | 3.74 | 3.58 | 1.89 |
| Courses | 1981 | With Reading = 1,107 | .00 - 12.00 | 4.39 | 3.00 | 1.73 |
| Attempted | Spring | | | | | |
| | 1982 | With and Without Reading = 1,111 | 1.00 - 14.00 | 4.38 | 3.54 | 1.88 |
| | Fall | With and Without Reading = 1,760 | .00 - 9.00 | 2.47 | 4.27 | 2.07 |
| Courses | 1981 | With Reading = 1,107 | .00 - 9.00 | 3.07 | 4.44 | 2.11 |
| Completed | Spring | | | | | |
| | 1982 | With and Without Reading = 1,111 | .00 - 10.00 | 3.06 | 4.70 | 2.17 |

APPENDIX B.2

TABLE B.2

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH
AND WITHOUT READING SCORES,
AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING
SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND
THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT
READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING
SEMESTER OF 1982, ON GRADE POINT AVERAGE,
READING SCORES, AND AGE

TABLE B.2

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES, AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER OF 1982, ON GRADE POINT AVERAGE, READING SCORES, AND AGE

| Variable | Term | Group and Number | Range | Mean | Variance | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade Point Average | Fall 1981 | With and Without Reading = 1,760 | .00 - 4.00 | 1.92 | 1.91 | 1.38 |
| | | With Reading = 1,107 | .00 - 4.00 | 2.00 | 1.59 | 1.26 |
| | Spring 1982 | With and Without Reading = 1,111 | .00 - 4.00 | 2.05 | 1.60 | 1.27 |
| Reading Scores | Fall 1981 | With and Without Reading = 1,760 | .00 - 99.00 | 25.24 | 820.33 | 28.64 |
| | | With Reading = 1,107 | 101 - 99.00 | 40.13 | 706.54 | 26.54 |
| | Spring 1982 | With and Without Reading = 1,111 | .01 - 99.00 | 31.21 | 847.62 | 29.11 |
| Age | Fall 1981 | With and Without Reading = 1,760 | 17 - 82 | 23.63 | 93.06 | 9.65 |
| | | With Reading = 1,107 | 17 - 82 | 20.79 | 26.72 | 5.17 |
| | Spring 1982 | With and Without Reading = 1,111 | 17 - 82 | 22.44 | 71.27 | 8.44 |

APPENDIX B.3

TABLE B.3

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH
AND WITHOUT READING SCORES,
AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING
SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND
THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT
READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING
SEMESTER OF 1982, ON EDUCATIONAL GOAL,
SEX, AND MAJORS

TABLE B.3

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES, AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER OF 1982, ON EDUCATIONAL GOAL, SEX, AND MAJORS

| Variable | Fall 1981 N | Fall 1981 % of 1760 | Spring 1982 N | Spring 1982 % of 1111 | Difference [1] N | Difference [1] % | 1,107 with Reading Scores N | 1,107 with Reading Scores % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Educational Goal | | | | | | | | |
| Transfer | 144 | 8.18 | 94 | 8.46 | 50 | 34.72 | 103 | 9.30 |
| Transfer with AA or AS degree | 481 | 27.33 | 377 | 33.93 | 104 | 21.62 | 394 | 35.59 |
| AA or AS degree vocational | 211 | 12.00 | 142 | 12.78 | 69 | 32.70 | 158 | 14.27 |
| AA or AS degree general education | 255 | 14.49 | 183 | 16.47 | 72 | 28.24 | 193 | 17.44 |
| Certificate | 100 | 5.68 | 60 | 5.40 | 40 | 40.00 | 60 | 5.46 |
| Upgrade job skills | 191 | 10.85 | 92 | 8.28 | 99 | 51.83 | 80 | 7.23 |
| Recreational/personal | 261 | 14.83 | 98 | 8.82 | 163 | 62.45 | 58 | 5.24 |
| Other | 116 | 6.59 | 65 | 5.85 | 51 | 43.97 | 60 | 5.46 |
| Time to Complete Goal | | | | | | | | |
| One semester | 145 | 8.30 | 63 | 6.12 | 82 | 56.55 | 33 | 2.98 |
| One or more semesters | 1,605 | 91.70 | 1,043 | 93.88 | 562 | 35.02 | 1,068<br>6 unknown | 96.48<br>0.54 |
| Majors | | | | | | | | |
| Two-year | 1,134 | 64.49 | 640 | 57.61 | 494 | 43.56 | 609 | 55.01 |
| Four-year | 625 | 35.51 | 471 | 42.39 | 154 | 24.64 | 497 | 44.90 |

[1] between Fall (N=1,760) and Spring (N=1,111) divided by N of Fall for %

## APPENDIX B.4

## TABLE B.4

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES, AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER OF 1982, ON SEX AND RACE

TABLE B.4

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 1,760 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES, AND THE 1,107 STUDENTS WITH READING SCORES IN THE FALL SEMESTER OF 1981, AND THE 1,111 STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT READING SCORES WHO RETURNED FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER OF 1982, ON SEX AND RACE

| Variable | Fall 1981 N | Fall 1981 % of 1,760 | Spring 1982 N | Spring 1982 % of 1,111 | Difference[1] N / % | 1,107 with Reading Scores N / % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | | | | | | |
| Male | 938 | 53.00 | 606 | 54.54 | 332/35.39 | 584/53.00 |
| Female | 819 | 47.00 | 505 | 45.46 | 314/38.34 | 523/47.00 |
| Race | | | | | | |
| American Indian | 29 | 1.65 | 19 | 1.71 | 10/34.48 | 22/2.00 |
| Asian | 25 | 1.42 | 22 | 1.98 | 3/12.00 | 14/1.27 |
| Black | 12 | .68 | 10 | .90 | 2/16.67 | 5/0.45 |
| White | 1,588 | 90.33 | 998 | 89.91 | 590/37.15 | 996/89.97 |
| Hispanic | 92 | 5.23 | 57 | 5.14 | 35/38.04 | 66/5.96 |
| Filipino | 1 | .06 | 1 | .09 | 0.00 | 1/0.09 |
| Other | 11 | .63 | 3 | .27 | 8/72.72 | 3/0.26 |

[1] % difference between Fall, 1981, (N=1,760) and Spring, 1982, (N=1,111) divided by N for %

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5. SIERRA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
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